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# THE OLD LOVE AND THE NEW.

VOL. I.

# THE OLD LOVE AND THE NEW

## A Tale of Athens.

8853

BY

SIR EDWARD CREASY, M.A.,
AUTHOR OF "THE FIFTEEN DECISIVE BATTLES OF THE WORLD," ETC.

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*IN THREE VOLUMES.*

VOL. I.

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Inscribed to

WILLIAM LAURENCE ELIOT,

IN SPECIAL RECOLLECTION OF ETON AND KING'S,

BY HIS OLD SCHOOLFELLOW AND FRIEND

THE AUTHOR,

E. S. C.

# PREFACE.

I HAVE not attempted in these volumes to preserve more accuracy, as to the dates and other details of real events, than has usually been thought requisite in historical romances. This remark applies particularly to the true dates of the first representation of many of the Greek Plays herein quoted.

In the first volume, p. 119, there are some lines on a sea-fight, which formed part of a paper, entitled "Pæans of the Athenian Navy," written by me in 'Blackwood,' in December, 1847.

Much more of this novel, both verse and

prose, was written long years ago. The task of remodelling and completing those portions has helped to soothe many months of travel and of illness, which I have lately passed, by calling up recollections of old classical studies, and of the friends, who were my comrades and competitors in those studies.

E. S. Creasy.

*April 6th*, 1870.

# THE OLD LOVE AND THE NEW.

## CHAPTER I.

Ἀλώσεται. Δεινὸς ὁ προσχωρῶν Ἄρης,
Δεινὰ δὲ Θησειδᾶν ἀκμά.
Μάντις εἶμ' ἐσθλῶν ἀγώνων.
Εἶθ' ἀελλαία ταχύρρωστος πελειὰς
Αἰθερίας νεφέλας κύρσαίμι τῶνδ' ἀγώνων
Ἐωρήσασα τὸν μὸν ὄμμα.

*Œd. Col.* 1065—1066.
1080—1084.

A LITTLE after daybreak on a spring morning in the last year of the 87th Olympiad, an armed band marched rapidly forth from the border-fortress of Œnoë, near the north-western frontier of Attica.

Struggling through the deep ravine, which lay below the castle-wall, and then pressing northward up the rocky ascent, they were soon threading the narrow mountain-road

that leads up from the Eleusinian plain, along and across the southern slopes and the summits of Mount Cithæron, and thence down into the rich Bœotian lowlands, which are watered by the Asopus and its tributary streams.

Six lightly equipped swordsmen formed the van. Their only defensive arms were leathern helmets and small round targets. Each of them carried in his right hand a javelin ready for immediate use. The main body consisted of ten of the Athenian regular infantry, all fully accoutred with the panoply of the phalanx, with the crested brazen helmet, the cuirass, the greaves, and the ample shield, with the short sword in the belt, and the long spear in the grasp. After these came four bow-men, whose features and garb told their Scythian origin and servile condition; and whose dull, sullen air contrasted strongly with the bold alert aspect, and frank merriment of the javelin-men in the van, who were all free-born Athenians, though of the poorer class; as well as with

the bearing of the middle-class citizens, of whom the heavy-armed infantry was composed.

The officer in command was the only horseman of the party. The colour of the horse was deep bay; and his compact, massiveness of form, his short clean legs, powerful quarters, and deeply-slanted shoulder betokened a rare union of activity and strength. The neck was well-arched, but short; the head somewhat heavy; and the restless expression of the eye indicated a kind of temper, which would require careful training, and a firm and fearless rider to make such a charger fit for the parade-ground or the battle-field. But the cavalier who now bestrode him knew and ruled him well. A thick fleece, dyed with purple, was girt upon the horse's back, and formed the saddle, on which sate the Athenian captain with the graceful poise and gesture which Pheidias has immortalised in his sculptures of the Attic horsemen.

Leon (as the young officer was named),

was the sole heir and representative of one of the noblest and most opulent families in Athens. Though not gifted with personal beauty in its exactness of symmetry or in its softer graces, he showed in aspect and in bearing that he was no ordinary man. And many, whose praises for perfection of form and hue were monopolised by some of his youthful competitors in the palæstra, yet found Leon's image dwell the longest and the most vividly on the memory. His grey eye generally had a calm and almost sleepy expression, which a favourable observer might have attributed to thoughtfulness, and an unfavourable physiognomist to sensualism; but in moments of excitement it blazed black through its lashes from beneath the pent-house of his broad and strongly-developed forehead. His mouth betrayed at its corners some faint early signs of those deadly downward curves, which infallibly attest the workings of suffering or of sin, or of both. The thin but exquisitely chiselled lips seemed schooled by long effort

into smoothness, but occasionally throbbed and curled as if with almost savage vehemence. The chin was massive, and partly covered by a carefully-trimmed beard. His hair clustered in dark curls beneath the gilt and brilliantly-burnished helmet, over which waved a triple snow-white crest. His breast-plate and greaves were of bronze inlaid with silver. His military cloak, and the tunic, which he wore beneath his armour, were crimson of the deepest Tyrian dye. A richly embroidered saffron scarf was passed over his right shoulder; and, knotted in it, on his left side appeared the silver scabbard and carved ebony hilt of his short cut-and-thrust sword. In his right hand he bore a long spear, like those of the regular infantry; but the shield, which was now carried for him by one of two slaves, who walked by his horse's side, formed no part of his accoutrements as a cavalier; and was only intended to be used by him when fighting on foot in the ranks of the phalanx. The shield was emblazoned, according to the

custom of the time, with Leon's own device, a child grasping a thunderbolt—the same emblem that was assumed by the celebrated Alcibiades to denote the hero's spirit of careless merriment in peace and his fierce energy in war.

Ranking among the highest of the Greeks, Leon was also an almost universal favourite with the mass of his fellow-countrymen. Though falling far short of the exalted standard of oratory which Pericles had lately created at Athens, he was a ready and a not ungraceful debater. He knew how to speak the right word at the right moment: and he had the still rarer faculty of knowing when it was best not to speak at all. He was generally, though not profoundly acquainted with the philosophy and the exacter sciences of the age: and no one surpassed him as a zealous admirer and generous patron of the poetry and the plastic arts, which then were in their meridian in Greece. Leon was indeed by nature, as well as by education keenly susceptible to

all intellectual excitement; though his genius and his moral frame were impaired by the indulgence of an equal susceptibility to gratifications of a more sordid kind. But his very faults, controlled as they were by strong common sense, promoted his popularity with the mass of the Athenians. They liked him all the better for not rebuking their own imperfections by the exhibition of austere excellence. His wealth also was freely used by him, so as both to dazzle and win the public. No Chorēgus brought his drama on the stage with more splendour than Leon; and the war-galley, which he, like other opulent citizens, was required to equip for the service of the state, was always the best-appointed ship in the fleet. His liberality in providing extra-pay and comforts for those who served under him, made him a most popular officer both by sea and land. And he had far better claims to favour in time of war. An abler seaman than Leon never stepped along a galley: a stouter spearman never guided a

charge. He had distinguished himself in several of the first engagements of the war; and was now marching to take the highly responsible command of the auxiliary Athenian force at Platæa—the gallant little city that stood firm to her ancient alliance with Athens, though she was girt round and incessantly menaced by the other Bœotian states, the most deadly of the many foes now leagued together under the supremacy of Sparta for the purpose of crushing the Athenian Empire.

The station at Platæa seemed likely to be one of peculiar peril that spring. Hostilities had not yet recommenced after the usual cessation during winter; but the report was rife that the Lacedæmonians intended not to invade and devastate Attica as usual, but to march northward of Mount Cithæron into Bœotia, and to lend their full force to the Thebans for the purpose of besieging and destroying Platæa. When, therefore, the discussion came on in the Athenian Assembly as to what general should be sent

to Platæa, while the roads were yet open, to relieve part of the Athenian force that had been posted there during the preceding year, and to command the garrison for the protection of the town during the coming campaign, most of the military leaders hung back from the appointment to such a Castle Dangerous. Leon at once volunteered for the service. His countrymen gladly voted him to the command; and many of every class came forward readily to act under him. He left Athens without delay, at the head of a force about sixty strong. He had orders to lose no time in effecting his march while the enemies' armies had not yet advanced; and he was to send back, out of the troops that were already in garrison at Platæa, a number corresponding with the amount of the relieving force which he led from Athens. On reaching Œnoë on the afternoon of his second day's march, Leon had arrived near the very boundary of the Attic and Bœotian territories; and there only remained about fifteen miles of mountain road to be traversed

between Œnoë and Platæa. He sent the greater part of his men and the baggage on to Platæa at once; but he himself, with a small band, halted for the night at the border fortress, for the ostensible purpose of concerting military operations with the commandant of Œnoë; but, in reality, because that officer was an old friend and kindred-spirit, with whom he wished to enjoy one farewell symposium, before he buried himself within the dull walls of a Bœotian town.

Such a licence might have procured for many a Greek republican general a vote from his countrymen for his death or exile; but Leon was a favourite with the Athenian multitude, and he presumed upon his favour. He knew, also, his own powers of attaching enthusiastically to his person all who served under him: and he had little fear that any of the soldier-citizens, who shared in the festivities of Œnoë, would denounce him to the Assembly of the People on their return, if, indeed, he and any of them should ever return to Athens.

The piquets sent out from Œnoë that night had been somewhat scanty and supine; and it was a goatherd who, towards morning, brought in the report, that an armed troop, supposed to be a band of plunderers from Megaris, had made their way in the darkness northwards along the mountain-pass. These tidings had caused Leon to put his men early in motion, and to press forward, in the hope of overtaking the marauders, before they reached the point where the road branches off into two paths, one leading northward towards Platæa, the other running in a north-eastern direction towards Thebes and Chalcis.

Leon had advanced a few miles from Œnoë along the main mountain-road, when a shout from one of the light-armed called him to the van; and, cantering forward, he saw in some loose, crumbled earth the fresh tracks of a party of men on foot, and the hoof-marks of, apparently, two mules. They traced the foot-prints off the road to a copse at its side; and they perceived also the same steps returning

from the copse to the mountain-road a little further on. A keener search soon discovered a small plot of grass in the middle of the copse, where the marauders had evidently halted for refreshment. Encouraged by the sight, the javelin-men and archers ran rapidly along the path, which now had spanned the mountain-ridge, and began to slope downwards towards the north. Leon and the heavy-armed infantry followed as closely as the nature of the ground would permit. Bounding eagerly forward, but taking care to keep together, the light-armed Athenians, on rounding a corner in the path caused by the projection of a huge rock, suddenly found themselves close upon a party of twelve or fourteen men, all armed with sword, target, and lance, though not so fully accoutred as regular infantry. These men drove before them two mules bearing a covered litter, by the side of which their captain (as he appeared to be) kept careful guard. The Dorian dialect, in which he called on his followers to form, and to defend the booty,

told the pursuers that they had the expected Megarian enemies to deal with. Instantly the Athenian light-armed hurled their javelins; and then, drawing their swords, rushed boldly forward to the encounter. But the Megarians, superior both in number and equipment, stood firm against the charge; and then, advancing in a compact body, drove their light-armed adversaries at the lance's point back before them up the pass. The Athenian van was fairly defeated, when Leon's crest was seen glancing round the corner of the rock. Calling on his men to clear the way, he galloped, with levelled spear, down the declivity, right through the ranks of the advancing Megarians, who were panic-stricken at his unexpected appearance and prompt attack. But the Megarian captain had kept back four of his best men close to the mule-litter; and these, as Leon came on, hurled their lances, with steady aim, at the horse and its rider;—one wounding the horse in the neck, and another grazing with his lance Leon's cheek just below the helmet.

The wounded charger swerved in his career, rearing and plunging violently. And, while Leon strove to prevent the horse from backing over a precipice by the eastern side of the road, the Megarians thronged around, and dragged him from the saddle, shouting loudly with joy at the fresh prize which they had won. The Athenian light-armed, kept at bay by the lances of the Megarian main body, beheld their leader's capture with unavailing rage. But at this crisis the measured tramp of regular infantry was heard. The ten heavy-armed Athenians appeared on the scene of action. Forming in a double line, they occupied the whole breadth of the mountain-road. Their spear-heads flashed as they were lowered to the charge: they clanged their ample shields; and, raising their national battle-cry, they advanced swiftly, but steadily, to the rescue. The Megarians had hitherto fought well; but for targeteers to face regular infantry was thought madness; and the marauders now broke, and fled before the Athenians down

the mountain-side. Two of their number were left on the ground; one of whom had been speared and ridden down by Leon; the other had fallen close to the mule-litter, hit by an arrow from the bow of one of the Scythians, who at first had sought cover by the road-side, but had come forward when the victory was secure, and poured a volley on the defeated Megarians. In the confusion of his captors at the decisive charge of the heavy-armed, Leon had shaken off the grasp of the man who held him; and then, picking up a javelin from the ground, he ran forward to where his horse had been led, just in time to prevent the Megarian captain from hamstringing the gallant bay. One of the mules had already been thus mutilated by the defeated and disappointed brigands; and the animal had fallen to the ground, dragging the litter with it. The nearest of the Athenian soldiers heard a smothered shriek; and when they had run to the spot, and disengaged and opened the litter, they found in it, bound hand and foot, a lady, whom

several of them at once recognised as one of the brilliant constellation of beauties, that had lately shone around Pericles and Aspasia at Athens.

She was speedily released from her bonds; and, revived by the fresh air, she stood eagerly gazing on the group of soldiers who now thronged round her. She recognised, with almost frantic joy, the Athenian armour, and the Attic accent of her deliverers. But to her urgent entreaties to be taken back to Athens a grim old spearman replied, with a bitter laugh, "You forget your position, young damsel: you were the Megarian's property a few minutes ago, and now you are ours; that is to say, our General's. You are no free-born daughter of Athens; you were a mere resident alien among us. We have captured you now beyond the Attic frontier from an enemy, who had made you part of his goods and chattels; so that you are fair spoil of war, and very fair spoil, too."

The captive lady raised her clasped hands

to heaven, and sighed bitterly—"Still a slave!"

"Yes, still a slave," answered Crantor (as the spearman was named). "Still a slave, but with a somewhat material change of owners. For I take it that it is better to belong to a gallant Athenian than to a half-starved hound of Megara. But come," added he, "we must take you forward to the General, and report the results of this morning's work."

Leon had not witnessed this scene. He had ridden forward on his recovered charger at the end of the skirmish together with some of the light-armed, in order to prevent the enemy from rallying, and to take care that they formed no ambush in the path. But on reaching a point marked by three ancient oak-trees, where the roads diverged, he saw the Megarians in full flight down the way that led straight to Thebes; so that his own route, which lay to the left, was evidently clear. Halting therefore at the Oak-heads, he ordered the troop to close up; and,

hearing that a damsel had been captured from the enemy, he directed her to be brought before him. She had been severely bruised in the fall of the litter; and Crantor, finding her scarcely able to walk along the rough mountain road, had caused her to be placed on the uninjured mule, which was led along by one of the Scythians. When they approached the Oak-heads, Leon, who had not dismounted, was leaning over his charger's neck, and directing the application of some liniment to its wound. Being informed that the captive was there, he raised his head, and looked with some curiosity to see what sort of booty fortune had thrown into his hands; but at the first glance that he caught of her features he unconsciously reined back his horse, exclaiming in a tone of surprise, "Atalanta!"

A slight inclination of the head was the captive's only reply.

Leon paused for a few seconds: he then added, in a rather sarcastic tone, "Our present meeting is somewhat different from our last."

"You are generous in reminding me of the difference," replied Atalanta with calm contempt. "I then, though not your equal in rank or privilege, was free. And you were then one, whose advances I had the power of rejecting, and whose arrogance I had the capacity for humbling. *Now* I am a slave; and you are my lord and master."

Leon scowled, and coloured deeply. "You mistake me, lady," said he, "as you have always chosen to mistake me." Then, calling to Crantor, who with the other soldiers had fallen back a little distance, "Crantor," he cried, "choose the freshest six files of the spearmen, and half the light-armed—counter-march instantly to Œnoë. Escort this lady thither—she is free—I say it:—I make it so, if necessary. Give my signet-ring to Callias the commandant. Tell him that I adjure him by our long friendship, by the friendship of our fathers, that he instantly cause the lady Atalanta to be conducted to Athens in all safety and honour. I trust," added he, turning to Atalanta with a haughty

bow, "I trust that to-morrow's sunset will leave you safe within the Athenian walls, with ample security and leisure before you to amend your judgments of character."

"Nay, my General," interposed Crantor, coming forward close to Leon and Atalanta, so that the soldiery should not hear his words—"Nay, my General, not so. Listen to me; to one, who is as true a friend to you as Callias can be, and who was himself your father's comrade. Do not divide your force already too scanty. Do not expose it to being beaten in detail by some such hostile band as that which we have just quelled. Beware, too, of what the Athenians at home, and those in Platæa, whom we ought to relieve, may say of us, if we fail to have our full force in the town to-night. That Megarian dog yonder, with the arrow sticking in his shoulder, has owned that his gang expected to be joined by Bœotian troopers at the foot of Cithæron; and that the Dorian ravens from the Peloponnesus are already at the Isthmus flocking to the siege of

Platæa. Bring your detachment complete into the town while the road is yet open: and do not add another awkward story about neglect of duty, to that which a private enemy might forge against you out of last night's halt. As for the fair captive, give her her freedom, if you like; and let her go back to Athens to-morrow from Platæa, with that part of the garrison, which we are to relieve. But, by the Great Goddess-Twain, let us all now march on to our duty."

"The soldier counsels well," said Atalanta. "Let no Athenian's life, and no Athenian's honour, be jeopardised out of care for my safety."

"Spoken like a heroine," cried Crantor. "Come, General, bid the men march forward. Or—stay—will you not have your own wound and your horse's looked to? You both bleed."

"Mine is a mere scratch," replied Leon. "I have had old Samphoras's neck dressed. Marshal the men, Crantor, and march on,

since it must be so. Your return, lady, will be safer to-morrow with an escort of forty spears, than it would be with the scanty guard that I could send with you to-day! Are any of our men hurt, Crantor?"

"Only one besides yourself, and he but slightly. These Megarian miscreants did not wait for a grapple at close-quarters. We have killed one of them outright. He lies up the pass yonder; and I suspect by the blush on your spear-head that you yourself gave him his allotment in Tartarus. Here is another of the pack, whom we have picked up and brought along with us. What shall we do with him? His right shoulder is fairly split by the arrow; and he will not fetch a drachma in the slave-market. Shall I spear him? or would your Scythians like to gratify their martial tastes by putting their knives to his throat?"

"Not now," said Leon, glancing half in pity, half in disgust at the wounded wretch. "I hate the Spartan fashion of butchering men in cold blood; though you might as

well have despatched him at once, and not have cumbered our march with wounded prisoners. Lady," added he, bowing with formal courtesy to Atalanta, "may it please you to ride forward? The vanguard is formed; and the slave, who usually tends my horse, shall lead your mule along the mountain-track. I regret that you should be obliged to make this march to Platæa; but, at least, it shall be made in safety."

They parted: and Atalanta rode forward after the light-armed vanguard, half-reproaching herself for ingratitude to the man, who had waived the arbitrary power over her, which the fortune of war had given him; and half-resolved to keep up, for consistency's sake, the old dislike which she had formed against Leon, when she first met him at Aspasia's house in Athens.

Leon, when he ordered his troop to wheel to the left round the Oak-heads, and to continue their march to Platæa, directed the wounded Megarian to be supported along in the rear, and rode by him for a little

distance. The prisoner knew that Leon had spared his life, and answered his questions with more readiness than he had shown in replying to the threatening interrogatories of Crantor. Leon soon learned from him the particulars of the marauding expedition, in which he and his comrades had been engaged. But the modern narrator of this old Hellenic story may best blend that information with an account of who Atalanta was, and of the circumstances which led to her becoming the captive of the Megarians.

## CHAPTER II.

"En mer, les hardis ecumeurs!
Nous allion de Fez à Catane.
Dans la galère capitaine
Nous etions quatre-vingt rameurs.

"Ma belle fille, il faut vous taire,
Il faut nous suivre! il fait bon vent.
Ce n' est que changer de couvent;
Le harem vaut le monastère.

"Malgré sa plainte et ses clameurs
On l'emporte dans la tartane.
Dans la galère capitaine
Nous etions quatre-vingt rameurs."

VICTOR HUGO.

THE father of Atalanta was a Greek of Halicarnassus, who resided for some time at Sinope; but the last years of his life had been passed in Attica. He was one of the sculptors whom Pericles and Pheidias had employed in the execution of those un-

rivalled works, with which they adorned Athens, in the interval between the Persian and the Samian wars. He was high in the favour of the great statesman; and when the aged sculptor died, about five years before the Peloponnesian war commenced, his only child, Atalanta, who was then about sixteen years old, continued to reside at Athens, in the house of Aspasia, to whose friendship and protection the old man had on his deathbed intrusted her. The mother of Atalanta was a Georgian slave, who had died at Sinope. From her mother Atalanta derived the exquisitely fair complexion, the deep blue eyes, the light brown locks, and the commanding stature, that distinguished her from among beauties of purely Grecian origin. But her semi-servile birth degraded her, according to Greek prejudice, below the superior standard of humanity, which the true Hellenes arrogated as their own; and her position at Athens, though she was free and wealthy, and entitled to the full protection of the laws, was inferior

to that of the meanest daughter of genuine Attic race. But as to the elevation which mental endowment and tuition can give, Atalanta was far superior to the proud Athenian dames. Nearly all of them were brought up according to national custom, with little heed to their intellectual advancement, and in almost total seclusion from society. Atalanta had been elaborately and skilfully trained, not only in the acquirement of all accomplishments, and of the lighter graces of art and literature, but also to eminence in the highest intellectual culture of the brilliant age of Pericles. Among the daughters and sisters of the numerous merchants and men of science, whom the commercial and literary splendour of Athens drew thither, there were many ladies whose position was similar to that of Atalanta. The jealous rules of the Athenian Republic treated all resident aliens (or Metics, as they were termed,) as inferior beings; and a marriage contracted with any of them by an Athenian was not recognised by the strict-

ness of the municipal law, though this exclusive principle was occasionally disregarded. But, while the many beautiful and accomplished women of this class were thus churlishly regarded by the Athenian law, the admiration and homage of the noblest and most gifted among the sons of Athens followed them; and their acquaintance was eagerly sought by statesmen, generals, philosophers, orators, and poets, who in their houses found polished society, and the charms of intellectual and graceful female conversation, such as their own homes could rarely supply. The calumnies of the malevolent and of the ignorant assailed all the members of these brilliant reunions, and many slanders of the time have been too readily adopted by posterity. Pure and high-minded as Aspasia, and Atalanta, and others of their circle were, still the currency of such reports embittered the position in which they were placed at Athens. In a proud and somewhat suspicious spirit, such as Atalanta's, this created a watchful rigour

in exacting the most respectful deference from the Athenians who were admitted to her society; and she was apt to cherish an undue amount of prejudice against any one who showed the least tendency to levity, or who seemed to betray any consciousness of belonging to a superior class. She had fancied that she detected this in Leon, who was an occasional visitor at Aspasia's house; and this fancy had made her assume towards him an air of coldness, which at first piqued his vanity, and caused him to endeavour to make her regard him with at least a little more interest. His attentions were looked on by her as mere impertinent attempts at familiarity; and they were repelled with haughty silence, unless some incident gave her the opportunity of exercising her powers of sarcasm at his expense. At the last time that they met in Athens, before his march to Platæa, she had so bitterly offended him by a satirical remark, which was soon repeated through all the circles of Athenian society, that he had

vowed to himself never to look on her again. This irritation had in some degree caused him to apply for the military command in Platæa. And he little thought, in marching from Attica, that he was on the way to a meeting with the very Atalanta against whom he felt such wrath and indignation.

It now remains to narrate the early part of the marauding expedition of the Megarians, by which Atalanta was suddenly transferred from the security and festivity of Athens to the rough perils of the border passes of Mount Cithæron.

Among the many enemies of Athens in the great Peloponnesian war, the nearest, and not the least bitter, was the little state of Megaris; which, with a territory not so large as our Isle of Wight, and with a population always scanty and then wasted by famine and the sword stubbornly maintained her independence against her powerful neighbour. But the same vicinity to Athens, which exposed the Megarians to constant hostilities and suffering, gave them

also facilities for acquiring information as to what was taking place or was designed among the Athenians, and sometimes offered opportunities for bold retaliation.

It had become known at Megara that Lysicles (one of the wealthiest of the Athenians, and who, after the death of Pericles, had married Aspasia) was appointed to a high command that spring in the Athenian navy. And a runaway slave had also reported that Lysicles, in the joy of his heart at obtaining the appointment, had vowed to offer a solemn sacrifice to the Sea-Nymphs on one of the little islets that lie close to the mainland of Attica, below Mount Ægialeus, in the eastern curve of the Gulf of Salamis. It was also known that Lysicles had invited many of the most distinguished persons in Athens to be present at the sacrificial festival, which was to last two days, and for which tents were pitched on the island. Among those at Megara who heard this, was one Diphilus, the captain of a privateer, who was then

preparing for a cruise from the Megarian port of Pagæ on the northern side of the Isthmus of Corinth. The bold adventurer instantly saw the means of profiting by the intelligence, and communicated it to the owner of his ship, a rich Corinthian noble, named Timarchus, who was then at Pagæ superintending the fitting out of the privateer. The Megarian captain proposed that he and the crew which had been collected at Pagæ for the privateering expedition in the western seas, should be allowed first to take a ship from the other Megarian harbour of Nisæa on the southern coast, and dash across the Gulf of Salamis in the night-time to the little Attic islet for the capture of Lysicles and his whole party. The scheme was as eagerly adopted as it had been daringly formed; nor was the enterprise in reality so desperate as it might have appeared to many. It only required about two hours' hard rowing to take a galley from the Megarian harbour of Nisæa to the Attic coast near Mount Ægialeus; and the Athe-

nians, confident in their naval supremacy, kept but careless guard on the seas close to their own shores. But it was necessary for the scheme that a vessel should be ready in the usually desolate Nisæan harbour for the adventurers to embark in; and it seemed difficult to equip one there without awaking the suspicions of the Athenian cruisers that blockaded the southern coast of Megaris in the daytime, but generally returned to their own harbours at nightfall. But Diphilus reminded Timarchus of an old fifty-oared galley, which had long been lying deserted and apparently useless on the beach near Nisæa. This, as he said, would serve for a short, sharp dash at Attica; and Timarchus instantly purchased it from its owners, and caused some slight repairs to be done to it by night. The Corinthian gold was also lavishly employed in inducing the crew of privateersmen to follow their captain in this new and unexpected venture. Timarchus had been often in Athens before the commencement of the war; he knew Aspasia

and Atalanta well, and felt certain that they would be among the guests of Lysicles on the islet. He instructed and urged Diphilus to be sure to bring off all the women, even if he were to let Lysicles himself escape. Timarchus repeated these instructions with an earnestness and vehemence, that made the seaman stare and smile, but the pay offered for the service was high; and little else was thought important by the venturous spirits that were to perform it. Accordingly, when the second evening of the festival of Lysicles had arrived, the Megarian captain and his comrades stole silently out of Megara, and marched down in small parties through the dusk to Nisæa. They took arms for part of their number, and each man carried his oar and thowl on his shoulder. They mustered at the spot where the old galley lay on the beach, and then ran her down into the water, sprang on board, and rowed unchallenged and unsuspected straight for the little island where their intended captives were assembled.

It was fortunate for these gay Athenians that on this night they were lingering round the festal board in the principal pavilion at an unusually late hour. The silver goblets were circling; in which, tempered with water from the coolest mountain-streams, flashed beneath the lamplight the wines of Chios and of far distant lands. But many, who suffered the wine-cup to pass untasted by, still remained at the table spellbound by the words of the most gifted being that ever wore the female form. Aspasia was there; and she, from whose lips Pericles had learned eloquence, and Socrates philosophy, was now discussing with Euripides the comparative beauties of the antique lyric poetry, and of the choral lays, which he and the other tragedians of the day interwove with the dialogue of their dramas. At length Atalanta and Melissa, who were two of the younger ladies that accompanied Aspasia, rose and left the banqueting-tent to return to their own pavilion. But the beauty of the starlight night and the soft freshness of the sea-

breeze tempted them to stroll a little farther along the lonely beach of the little island. The moon had not yet risen over Mount Ægialeus, and the huge promontory frowned dimly over the islets and the sea at its base. Westward before Atalanta and Melissa rippled the Gulf of Salamis, and the cliffs of the long island of that name loomed indistinctly on the south-western limits of the horizon. Pausing in their walk, Atalanta and Melissa stood for a short time in silence at the edge of the tideless deep, listening to the pensive but musical monotony with which the little sea-curls plashed upon the shingle, and to the complaining sobbing sound of the pebbles when disturbed by the refluent water of each expiring wave. A slightly increasing gust of the night breeze fanned Atalanta's cheek, and raised the ringlets from her brow. She looked up; and some lines, which she had just heard Euripides repeat, came almost unbidden to her lips. They were the opening lines of one of the songs of the captive Trojan women, who form the

chorus in the great dramatist's tragedy of 'Hecuba':

> Oh breeze of the sea, oh breeze of the sea,
> Thou wanderer o'er the foam,
> Thou giver of wings so fast and free
> To the bark that seeks her home,
> Whither across the heaving wave
> Wilt thou waft the captive now?
> Which is the land where I, a slave,
> To a master's will must bow?*

"May the heavenly averters of ill protect us!" cried Melissa. "Your quotation is most ominous, Atalanta."

"Do you believe in omens, Melissa?"

"Of course I do. Was not my brother's ship wrecked last year because he *would* set sail on the very day that that black dog came into our house? And did I not tell you that I saw two darling doves just before I received Aspasia's invitation to this festival? And did not our slave, Xanthias

> Αὔρα, πόντιὰς αὔρα,
> Ἄτε ποντοπόρους κομίζεις
> Θοὰς ἀκάτους ἐπ' οἶδμα λίμνας,
> Ποῖ με τὰν μελέαν πορεύσεις;
> Τῷ δυυλόσυνος, πρὸς οἶκον
> Κτηθεῖσ' ἀφίξομαι;—*Hecuba*, 444.

stumble and fall in the dirty road at Piræus, and spoil my new robe which he was bringing home, and all because my mother, who is a little impatient, talked about the pains of Tartarus when she sent him for it? But you, Atalanta, have been so much with Anaxagoras, and the rest of those dreadful philosophers, that you have no belief at all."

"I hope," replied Atalanta, "that I may have as much true faith as others have, though I do not admit black dogs or darling doves among my deities; and though I do not exactly see how an old lady's ill-temper in the upper town could make the street slippery at three miles distance. But do not be offended, Melissa. Come, tell me of this omen about our present festivities. Was the appearance of the doves only a general sign that something pleasant was about to happen? or, did the two winged darlings denote to you any two unwinged darlings whom you were to meet here?"

"Why, to tell the truth, Atalanta, I did

think after I had the invitation,—I did think that the two doves foretold that I should meet Ameinias — and — and Leon. I did not know that he had been sent over the mountains to that horrid place Platæa."

"No great loss," said Atalanta; "but your other dove, Ameinias, is here."

"Yes; but I like Leon best. Do *you* like Leon, Atalanta?"

"I *like* him? I despise and detest him."

"How can you say so, Atalanta? Why he is brave, and young, and clever, and agreeable. He is certainly not *very* handsome, but—"

"It is his want not of good looks, but of good sense and good feeling that I detest, Melissa."

"You must say that for the mere sake of being singular. No one else would say so. How fond Neæra was of him; and I know that both Myrrhina and Theodora like him. Everybody likes him."

"Yes; and he likes everybody after his

insolent fashion. That is of itself quite enough to arm me against such an admirer. But he is out of Athens, and you had better get him out of your thoughts, Melissa."

"I am sure, Atalanta, that he is nothing to me—I never cared about him."

"Indeed! Then how came the ominous dove to signify his presence here? and what a proof you have in his absence of the falseness of omens, my poor little soothsayer."

"Why you see, Atalanta, the omen might be true in the nature of its sign, but I might make a mistake by applying it to the wrong individual. The first dove was right about Ameinias: and, though Leon is away, the second dove might have meant Thrasyllus, who *is* here. He has paid me *so* much attention all the evening—I am sure I saw him once kiss the edge of the wine-cup exactly where my lips had touched it."

"Happy Melissa! when you return to the city, you will go full of fluttering hope

to the old woman with the magic sieve to get her to tell your fortune for the hundredth time. And I dare say that to-night you will find some laurel-leaves to burn, that their crackling may tell you of Thrasyllus's love. I am glad that to you this evening has been so pleasing. It has not been so to me."

"What is it that has made you so melancholy, Atalanta? Not Leon's absence, it seems. Is there any one else whom you had hoped to meet here?"

"No such silly disappointments weigh down my spirits. That choral lay, which we heard Euripides recite, and which you thought so ominous just now, when I repeated its first lines, called up a host of gloomy images. My mother was a slave. Perhaps the same destiny awaits her child."

"May all the gods of Olympus protect us! You do not really think, Atalanta, that there is any likelihood of the Peloponnesians storming Athens?"

"No. My anxiety comes from the feel-

ings, and not from calculation; but is not the less real and painful."

"It must be very unpleasant to be a slave."

"'*Unpleasant*,' Melissa? it is the most awful calamity that can befall a human being. For those of our sex and age it has horrors which the lip loathes to hint at, though the mind is too prone to think of. How hollow, how hideously untrue are the boasts which the Greeks, and the Athenians in particular are ever making of their eminence in virtue, wisdom, and refinement. Why, more than half of the human habitants in yon great city, that vaunts herself 'the enlightener of Hellas,' are slaves; things to be bought and sold, as beasts are bought and sold for the shambles. Do you know, Melissa, the definition which the great political philosophers give of a slave?"

"No, Atalanta. But as you have seen so much of Pericles and his learned friends, I suppose you know it."

"'A slave is a kind of chattel with a soul

in it—'* so they define it; and to be such a chattel, and to be used as such, they consider the just and natural condition of three-fourths of the human race, especially of those, who like myself, have any barbaric blood in their veins."

"Oh, Pallas shield us!" exclaimed Melissa. "Look, Atalanta. What is that black shape moving towards us, close under the cliffs of Salamis?"

"Some fishing-boat, I suppose."

"It is too large for a fishing-boat, and I hear the plash of many oars. See, they are out beyond the shadow now. It is a large galley; and they are rowing straight towards us. Oh, Atalanta, what shall we do?"

"Stay quietly where we are. Of course it is an Athenian galley. Probably she brings messengers to Lysicles. Yet it is strange what should cause her to come in such a line. Her direction from Piræus

* This fearfully accurate definition of a slave was really given at a later period by Aristotle. Ὁ Δοῦλος κτῆμά τι ἔμψυχον.—1. Polit. 4.

would not have brought her round by Salamis."

As they spoke, the galley came nearer and nearer to the shelving beach where they were standing. They saw that the oarsmen were pulling desperately; they heard the hoarse shout of the boatswain quickening the stroke; then came from another voice the command to the steerer; "Beach her where those girls stand!" The threatening prow rushed right at them. Paralyzed with terror Melissa clung round Atalanta, who stood gazing in speechless surprise. At a few lengths from the shore the oarsmen ceased rowing; but the galley had way enough, and her bow grounded high and dry on the beach close to Atalanta's side. Armed men instantly sprang down from the forecastle, and at once secured the fainting Melissa; but Atalanta fled along the shore towards the banqueting tent closely chased by some of the galley's crew. She had reached the row of tents; but was still far from the one she sought, when she found that her

strength was fast failing. She just evaded the grasp of her nearest pursuer, and slipt aside into the entrance of a pavilion where a torch was burning. She caught it up, and fired the canvass walls. The next moment she was seized, and dragged off towards the galley; but the flames shot up to the sky; and spreading rapidly through the encampment, effectually gave the alarm which her cries had failed to convey to Lysicles and his companions. Hurrying forth the Athenians saw the armed band of desperadoes greedily snatching from the flames, and from each other the rich booty of the sacrificial vessels. Lysicles and his friends were unarmed, and might have been easily all slain or captured, had it not been for the disorder created among the privateersmen by the fire, and for the dread which the most prudent of the Megarians felt lest the sight of the flames should bring Athenian cruisers to the spot. The Megarian captain collected, as speedily as possible, those of his crew who had landed, and told them that they had done enough.

"The two girls," said he, "will sell well enough to satisfy Timarchus; let us get safe off with them and the plate, before the war-ships from Salamis and Piræus come swarming round us."

Accordingly, they at once returned to their galley, shoved her off into deep water, and with Atalanta and Melissa on board pulled hard to regain their own harbour. But their galley was old and badly payed, and the shock of beaching her had started several of her timbers. Many hands were taken off the oars, and set to bale. And while they thus returned with unavoidable slowness, Athenian galleys were darting from every point towards the little island to learn the meaning of the supposed fire-signals. Lysicles soon sent one of these in pursuit of the privateer; and the Megarian chief, seeing her gain rapidly on him, was glad to run his ship ashore at the nearest part of the Megarian territory, close under Mount Kerata. Foreseeing that his pursuers would land also, he tried to baffle them by dividing

his band and his prizes. He sent off the greater number of his followers with Melissa, bidding them make the best of their way to Megara or Corinth. He himself, with a few of the most resolute and active of the crew turned northwards for the mountain-passes, taking Atalanta with them. They obtained a mule-litter at a village near the coast, and placing their captive in it, they hurried across the western extremity of the Attic territory towards Bœotia. They hoped to effect the passage of Mount Cithæron before sunrise, and to reach Thebes with their prize next day. Some Thessalian slave-dealers came every spring to that city, with whom the Megarian captain had often transacted business, and who would be sure to give a high price for a slave of Atalanta's youth and beauty. As for the settlement with Timarchus, that was a matter which the privateersman cared little about adjourning, so that he could provide himself with ample funds for fresh ventures. The Megarians succeeded in reaching Mount Cithæron, and in passing the walls of Œnoë.

Thinking themselves then in safety, and utterly worn out by the fatigues of the night they then halted near the mountain-road for an hour's rest. This halt gave Leon's troop time to come up with them before they could clear the pass; and thus caused the skirmish which has already been described, and the rescue of Atalanta.

## CHAPTER III.

"How beautiful, if Sorrow had not made
Sorrow more beautiful than Beauty's self.
There was a listening fear in her regard,
As if Calamity had but begun;
As if the vanward clouds of evil days
Had spent their malice, and the sullen rear
Was with its storèd thunder labouring up."

KEATS.

AFTER the conversation between Atalanta and Leon at the Oak-heads, which followed her liberation, and when it was resolved to march on to Platæa, Leon kept for a little time his place in the rear by the side of the wounded Megarian, from whom he learned the main facts of the privateersmen's attack upon the island, of Atalanta's capture, and of the attempt of her captors to escape through

the passes of Cithæron. Leon then rode along in silence, gazing often on Atalanta, who still preceded him in the line of march, and musing on the strangeness of the circumstances which had caused them thus to meet again. A sharp turn of the narrow road along which they slowly advanced, gave him, for a few minutes, a full view of her features, and he was deeply impressed both by their extreme beauty and by the air of sadness which they wore.

The painful adventures of the night and morning might have brought an expression of care and suffering upon any countenance. But Leon remembered that he had often observed the same look of apprehensive mournfulness on Atalanta's face in the midst of the gayest scenes at Athens. It told of a heart ill at rest,—of a spirit that felt its position in life to be a false one, but felt, at the same time, the strength of the destiny which had determined that position. Leon had often seen this; but he thought now that he had never before sufficiently

heeded Atalanta's sadness, or appreciated her surpassing loveliness. A coarse, blue boat-cloak had been thrown round her by the Megarians when they captured her; and she now wore it over her torn and soiled white robe. But it could not wholly conceal the stately proportions and graceful symmetry of her form; and it only made more conspicuous the polished whiteness and exquisite shape of her sandaled foot, her hand, and her partially exposed throat. Her hair had escaped from the silken network, by which it had been restrained, and the long light-brown curls fell in glossy masses over her shoulders. The rays of the morning sun were now striking with considerable force on many parts of their road, and, as a protection from the glare, she had wreathed her rose-coloured scarf into a light turban over her broad and low fair forehead. But no perfection of adornment or elaborate brilliancy of attire could have increased the effect of her beauty on Leon. For a moment he caught her eye,—her soft, full eye of

deep, almost purple blue, like the hues which the heavenward outlines of distant hills wear in the milder glories of an autumn day. Leon well knew how those large blue eyes of Atalanta, fringed with long black lashes, and closely canopied by even, well-defined brows, could flash pride and domination from a countenance, which, otherwise, might have seemed cold and unenergetic, such was the finished regularity of its features, and such the marble-like whiteness of the complexion. He knew also well how much determination, as well as how much susceptibility could be expressed by the shape and play of those full and well-formed lips. But it was Atalanta in her sadder, and to him sweeter mood, that he now gazed on; and when, through the straitening of the road, her station in the line of march deprived him of the full opportunity of viewing her, he soon began to falter in his resolution of maintaining the greatest possible distance between them. Such had been his purpose, when at the Oak-heads

he gave the order for marching forward to Platæa. He then designed to keep altogether aloof from her, both on the march and on their arrival at Platæa, and to provide for her return to Athens on the morrow, without exchanging a single syllable with her. But he now began to argue with himself that this would look like sullenness on his part; and that, by showing sullenness he would show that she possessed the power to annoy him. He then considered that he ought not to gratify her by thus owning her influence. He determined, therefore, neither to shun nor to seek conversation with her, but to preserve a dignified air of indifference. Having resolved on adhering to this line of conduct, he saw no reason for riding any longer in the rear, and he quickened his charger's pace. This, of course, brought him closer to Atalanta; but he thought that he would ride ahead of the column; and, as the necessity of passing by her side was not to influence him, he continued to urge Samphoras forward. On reaching

Atalanta's side, he drew bridle; but it was merely with the intention of exchanging a few words of common-place civility, and of then riding on to the head of the vanguard. He could not, however, help observing that Atalanta was suffering considerable pain, and that she had great difficulty in keeping her seat on the mule over some obstacles in the road, which they had to pass, at the moment when he rode up to her. He could not help observing this; and he could not help yielding to the natural kindly impulse, which prompted him to remain by her side, and assist her over the impediments in their way. There was a respectful gentleness in the services which the young general thus proffered, and which Atalanta could not decline, even if she had wished to do so, that insensibly went to her heart: and the look, with which she thanked him, had a softness which he had never found in her aspect before. He forgot all about his intention of riding on with the vanguard; and, directing the slave, who had

been leading her mule, to fall back, he himself guided the rein for her, and made his war-horse pace gently along at her side. Dreading to talk of her recent adventures, lest he should seem to be asking for thanks, Leon eagerly drew her attention to the beautiful scenery of their mountain-route. Their path now lay along the northern front of the long ridge of Cithæron, not sloping directly downward to the plain at its foot, but gradually slanting and winding along the mountain's side, through the dark forests of pine trees, and silver firs, which clothe its rugged cliffs. Even these woods, usually wild and gloomy, were now pleasing to the eye; for it was—

> "In the April prime,
> When all the forest-tips began to burn
> With kindling green, touched by the azure clime
> Of the young year's dawn."*

Frequently, too, the road traversed little grassy plots of fresh verdure and exquisite

* Shelley. 'Triumph of Life.'

beauty, which were watered by fountains gurgling forth from the shadowy caverns and grottoes of the mountain side. Spring flowers of the richest scent and hue clustered profusely in these little dells. Leon pointed to one of them near the road, and said, "Our Sophocles might have celebrated this glen, as justly as his favourite Colonus, for its abundance in the 'beautifully-clustering narcissus' and 'the golden-gleaming crocus.'" *

"Yes," replied Atalanta; and that little bed of violets, which we can just distinguish within yonder copse, might have suggested to Pindar the scene where Iamus, the sacred Violet-child was nursed."

"Pindar is no favourite of mine," answered Leon. "What are the lines?"

* Θάλλει δ' οὐρανίας ὑπ' ἄχνας
'Ο καλλίβοτρυς κατ' ἦμαρ ἀεὶ
Νάρκισσος, μεγάλαιν θεαῖν
'Αρχαῖον στεφάνωμ,' ὅ τε
Χρυσανγὴς κρόκος.—*Œd. Col.* 681.

"I will not argue Pindar's merits with you. The lines are these:

> "'Far within the pathless glade
> His little tender limbs were laid,
> Mid violets pale, and violets blue,
> That bathed him in their purple hue,
> Spangled o'er with heaven's dew.'"*

"The lines are pretty; but Pindar was a Theban, and I should hate even the Iliad if I thought that Homer was of Thebes."

"That is an avowal of prejudice more candid than creditable."

Leon bit his lip, and was silent. They passed through the glen and they now gained a part of the road, where the opening views of the level country at the base of the mountain ridge became more frequent and more distinct. At length they came to a spot where the woods to the right of the path

* Κέκρυπτό γαρ σχοίνῳ βατίᾳ τ'ἐν ἀπειράτῳ
Ἴων ξανθαῖσι καὶ παμπορφύοις ἀκτῖσι βεβρεγμένος ἁβρὸν
Σῶμα.—PINDAR, *Olym.* 6, l. 54.

had been completely cleared away for some distance, so that, as they rode slowly along, they gained an extensive and unimpeded prospect over the lowlands, and could distinguish the distant mountain-chains on the opposite side. The fertile alluvial district of the Asopus spread in the intervening space before their gaze, with its budding olive plantations and vineyards, its rich meadow lands, and its corn-fields, where the green blade already waved high, and over which the skylarks were pouring out their souls of song. Cities with shining walls and stately battlements rose, like islands, in the plain. The scenery, though familiar to Leon, was new to Aatlanta, and their conversation recommenced with inquiries by her respecting the names of the various Bœotian towns which they could distinguish. Leon felt ashamed of his little cloud of ill-temper, and readily described the chief objects within their view, adding, however, to his account of each Bœotian state some

bitter expression of hatred against the inhabitants for their hostility to Athens. At length, as they continued to descend nearer to the base of Cithæron, their road brought them more round to the westward; and Leon, in a far different tone, exclaimed, "There is our one friend in this land of enemies. Yonder temple on the height stands in the citadel of Platæa." Platæa itself was soon clearly visible, though they had to traverse the mountain side for a few more stadia before they would reach it. The little city was built on a spur of rising ground, that seemed to swell up from the plain, immediately opposite to one of the highest peaks of Cithæron. The ground all round the city was studded with monuments of those who had fallen in the great battle fought there between the confederate Greeks under Pausanias and the Persians under Mardonius. Leon pointed to one of these, and said, "Yonder broken column, a little to the left of that small stream, marks the spot where my grandfather fell in helping to

win the victory which saved Greece from Persia. He was killed fighting against the dogs of Thebes, who then sided with the invading barbarians against Greek freedom, as they now side with the Spartan aristocrats against Athens. May the Alastor of annihilation be on them!"

"For the sake of Pindarus," said Atalanta, smiling, "be a little less bitter against the city of the Theban eagle."

"Let, then, the house of Pindarus be spared; and let every other roof in Thebes go to the ground! I have good cause to be bitter against her. Those far hills to the north-west overlook the deadly plain of Coronea, where my father was killed, in the battle which Athens lost there twenty years ago against the Theban oligarchs. Crantor, my sergeant, in whose charge you were just now, and whose rough manners, I fear, offended you, was close to my father when he fell. Indeed, Crantor was nearly slain in trying to save him. Two generations of our house have been cut off in Bœotian

warfare; and, as I am to have the Thebans against me this summer in Platæa, I may probably make a third."

Leon's gaze, as he said this, was fixed with a grave but unfaltering expression on the little city, which now lay full in view, and which he was about to enter with the certainty of having to maintain there a desperate struggle for life or death against the superior force of his worst foes. Atalanta watched his features with deeper interest than she had ever before experienced while looking on the face of man. She now for the first time understood the better element of pride of birth, a species of pride which had always drawn down her hate and scorn upon any one who seemed to indulge in it. She now saw before her a living proof how the consciousness of belonging to a race of heroes can inspire even a man of faulty character with emulative daring, and with the unflinching resolution not to shame the ancestry which he boasts. Nor could she help feeling some sympathy for the

young life which was thus self-devoted; and she shuddered as she thought how soon the form on which she was gazing, and which was then animated with such strength, such buoyancy, such energy, and with a host of ardent and not ungenerous passions, might be stricken bleeding and powerless to the ground, and lie hacked and trampled into a loathly heap of dead flesh and bone. They rode on silently for some time, until Atalanta was the first to renew the conversation.

"And yet," she said, "though the command in Platæa is so perilous, I heard that you volunteered for it."

"Yes," replied Leon, glancing lightly round, and flinging off with sudden effort the load of gloom from his brow. "Yes. It was the best thing that I could do, after Lysicles had got the command of the fleet I wished for. I hate repose; and as for remaining at Athens for the chance of another appointment, to tell the truth, our Violet-crowned city was not very agreeable

to me this spring. Certain blue eyes, whose sunshine I coveted, gave me nothing but their cold star-light or their angry lightnings. I wanted a little excitement of a different kind, and this campaign will be sure to supply it. That I may live loving or die fighting is my established prayer to Arès and Aphrodite."

Atalanta turned her head away. Leon's last words had been spoken with that tone of levity which had originally made her so averse to him. He saw that he had unwarily made a speech which sounded very like love-making, and that it had proved a failure. Vexed with himself, he felt vexed with her also for her evident ill-humour, and did not choose to try to propitiate her. The road was now so level and easy that she no longer required any assistance. They had reached a little lawn under the frowning crest of the very highest part of Mount Cithæron, which here soared four thousand feet above them. At this spot their road turned off at a right angle, and led first

down a slight remaining declivity, and then across about two miles of slightly undulating ground up to the southern gate of Platæ.

Leon halted the column on this lawn, and wheeled the heavy-armed into line, facing the city. The light-armed were drawn up behind them, and in the rear of all were placed the Scythian archers, the slaves, and Atalanta, and the wounded Megarián. Before Leon assumed his station at the right of the heavy-armed, he took leave of Atalanta with formal courtesy, expressing his hope that she would not be displeased with the accommodation which he would cause to be provided for her in the citadel of Platæa, and that she would commence on the morrow a safe and agreeable journey back to Athens. Atalanta replied with equally ceremonious civility, acknowledging his services, and offering her best wishes for his safety and success in the campaign. They then parted, as each believed, never to see the other again. As Leon moved his little

phalanx towards the city, part of the garrison turned out to meet him. The trumpets sounded a gratulatory peal, and Leon cantered forward to join a knot of officers near the gate, to receive their welcome, and to narrate the skirmish on his march.

## CHAPTER IV.

*Ἰδοὺ, ξύναψον, Παρθέν'· ἐς καιρὸν δ' ἔβης·*
*Κινούμενον γὰρ τυγχάνει Πελασγικὸν*
*Στράτευμα, χωρίζουσι δ' ἀλλήλων λόχους.*
*Ἰὼ, πότνια παῖ Λατοῦς*
*Ἑκάτα, κατάχαλκον ἅπαν*
*Πεδίον ἀστράπτει.*

EURIP. *Phœnis.* 104.

ATALANTA, and the two slaves, whom Leon had ordered to attend her, entered Platæa by a side-gate, and slowly traversed the streets, which presented a strange contrast to the usual animation and busy traffic of a Greek town. Scarcely any one was to be seen except soldiers and the attendants on the soldiery. There was no sign or sound of commerce, or of the other occupations of civic life; and, if here and there the clang

of the hammer or the din of the carpenter and mason was heard, it proceeded either from an armourer's forge, or from some spot where the engineers were improving the defences. Small in area and strongly fortified the whole city seemed more like a military post than the capital of an independent state. At the commencement of the war the Athenians had removed from Platæa to the Attic territory all the feebler members of the population, and precautions had been taken for placing the city in the best condition to repel an assault and hold out against a blockade. With this view 400 of the best and bravest Platæans were selected, men whose attachment to Athens and the democratic cause was most to be relied on; and these alone of all the native inhabitants were left in garrison in the town. An auxiliary force of eighty Athenians was added, the members of which were from time to time relieved from Athens. More troops might easily have been supplied; but a garrison 480 strong

was thought sufficient to guard the little circle of the walls from an attack by escalade, and the military engines then used in sieges for breaching walls were not often effective against such substantial masonry as that which protected Platæa. Little fear was felt lest the city should be stormed by any hostile force, however numerous and however brave. Famine and treachery were the most formidable foes to a besieged town in those times, and it was therefore of importance to keep the Platæan garrison at the lowest effective number, so as to make the stores of provisions last as long as possible in the event of a blockade, and to diminish the chance of any traitors lurking among the defenders. A hundred and ten female attendants were appointed to prepare food and to render other domestic services to the garrison. It was decreed that no one else, either free or slave, should be suffered to tarry in Platæa.

As the speedy arrival of a besieging army before the walls was now no longer a mere

probability, but a certainty, this order was again proclaimed, and a rigorous search was instituted, in order to secure its enforcement. The camp-followers and others, who had lingered in the city in evasion of the military regulations, now came forth from their hiding-places, and eagerly availed themselves of the protection of the Athenian soldiers, whom Leon relieved, so as to escape in safety through the Bœotian territory. A motley cavalcade it was, that passed out of the city-gates on the morrow after Leon's arrival; but Atalanta was not one of the train. She had been conducted to the lofty plateau in the midst of the town, to a mansion, which had been designed for Leon's own head-quarters, on account of the commanding view of the whole city and country round, that could be obtained from its terraced roof; as well as on account of the superiority of its interior accommodations. There she had been received with respectful care by an aged attendant, named Lysisca; who, notwithstanding her servile origin and

station, was generally reverenced in Platæa for her medical skill. Seldom had that skill been more needed than it now was by Atalanta. The mental agony and the physical suffering, which she had undergone while in the power of the Megarian marauders,—the severe injury which she had experienced in the fall of the mule-litter,—and the fatigue of the subsequent march to Platæa, added to the tumult of conflicting emotions, with which she had been struggling since her rescue, were more than either body or spirit could sustain. On being led to her apartment, she had thrown herself upon the couch, in hopes of rest; but, instead of repose, came fiery fever to the frame, and whirling delirium to the mind. For days and weeks Atalanta lay on the bed of pain, utterly unconscious of all that was passing around her. She knew not of the arrival of the armies of the Peloponnesians and of the Thebans beneath the walls, or of the early operations of the memorable siege that now had commenced. She recognised

none that tended on her, either during the first paroxysms of her malady, or the stupor which followed. She seemed to lie beneath the outstretched sceptre of the Genius of Death; and it was as if her spirit had already fled to Hades, though animal life lingered awhile in the body. But the powers of youth and life were at length victorious in the conflict with the powers of destruction. Instead of Death, came Death's twin-brother Sleep in all his gracious blessedness, and steeped in balm the foldings of her tortured brain. That saving slumber lasted long: and, when Atalanta awoke from it, all peril had passed away, and the light of consciousness and reason had revived. She found herself lying weak and helpless, and an aged woman sitting by her, whose features she vainly strove to remember. She thought at first that she was in her own apartment at Athens; but every object seemed strangely changed. At last memory began to dawn; and recollections came thronging of the festal rites in the little

isle, of the choral songs and music,—of the phantom-like appearance of the strange ship at dead of night,—of the rush of armed men round her—of the being dragged off and flung into the galley's hold,—the long rapid plash of the oars,—the landing, and the forced change from the galley to the mule-litter,—the journey in bondage and darkness,—the fierce threats of the Megarian captain,—the uproar and the clash of the combat in the mountain-pass. Then came the image of Leon troubling still more her dizzy efforts to unravel and comprehend the tangled threads of her memories. Exhausted with the attempt she closed her eyes, and sank back into slumber. When she again awoke, Lysisca was leaning over her, and gently cautioning her to be still, and also telling her that all was well, and that the assault on the city had been repulsed. Atalanta obeyed the injunction of silence; but strove in vain to fathom the meaning of Lysisca's last words, though she had a dim remembrance of having lately heard a

mighty din and shouting, which seemed like Titanic echoes of the battle in the pass of Mount Cithæron.

Lysisca's skill and unremitting attention aided Atalanta's speedy restoration to health, and to some degree of strength. But the aged nurse still strictly forbade all conversation, telling her charge that life depended upon her remaining as silent and quiet as possible. Several days thus passed away, and Atalanta was at last permitted to quit her apartment, and, leaning on the arm of Lysisca, the only person whom she ever saw, to traverse slowly the adjoining hall of the desolate mansion in which they dwelt. Lysisca promised that when a certain number of days should have elapsed from the time when the gods drove the evil spirit of the fever away from her, she should, if strong enough, ascend the winding staircase to the terraced roof, and offer there her thanksgiving sacrifice to the Sun-god, who, in Lysisca's native land, as well as in Greece, was worshipped as the dispeller of darkness

and disease, and as the restorer of light and life. Till that rite should be performed, the superstition, as well as the science of the old attendant prescribed a sacred silence. But though thus debarred from acquiring full information respecting the events which had taken place since she entered Platæa, Atalanta rightly conjectured that she must have been left in the city not through any neglect of Leon's, but through the suddenness and violence of the fever which attacked her; and that the expected siege of the city was now being carried on. She often thought of Leon; and felt anxious to know if he still lived. For a long time she was too proud to question Lysisca as to his fate, and so to confess to herself the interest which she took in him. At length, one evening, as Lysisca sate by her side, Atalanta suddenly ventured on the whispered utterance of a heart-felt wish, "I trust that no harm has befallen the Athenian general, and the other brave men, who rescued me from the bandits?" Lysisca answered, "Leon lives—the Gods be

thanked for it! For he, with their aid, is the saviour of the city." Then, as if checking herself from undue communicativeness, she added, "But you must not talk, lady. Breathe no word of earthly things for two suns more; and then, by Apollo's favour! you shall be restored to other liberty besides that of speech."

Atalanta obeyed: but though she thought with pleasure of Leon's safety, she felt vexed that he should have so utterly forgotten her, as seemed to be the case. "Yet," said she to herself, "this man has no place in my heart; nor shall he have any in my memory. He deserves it not. What frivolous effrontery used he to display at Aspasia's! And all Athens spoke of him as of a man stained by the coarsest vices. His rescue of me in the pass was caused by a mere instinct for fighting; and his subsequent waiver of the tyrannical power to treat me as a slave was but the effect of a momentary impulse of his vanity, which I had wounded by my rebuke of his first un-

generous expressions. And yet my fate seems strangely blended with his. The safety of Platæa is probably dependent on his military skill. If he falls, the city falls; and I must again look to death as my only refuge from the pollutions of slavery. Alas, for what further miseries has this wretched life been preserved? Of what avail are my boasted powers of soul and intellectual adornments? Mine is a doom like Cassandra's; and, like Cassandra, I experience the fatal truth, that a gifted spirit in woman only enables her to foresee and forefeel her sufferings, and quiver beneath them with tenfold sensibility to agony and shame—

"Woe, woe is me!
Thou minstrel Nightingale, I envy thee.
A winged form, a life of song,
That knows no tear, or dread of wrong,
The fav'ring Gods to thee have given.
Mine is a doom of blood and woe;
I wait, beneath the curse of Heaven,
The deadly axe's cleaving blow."*

* ΚΑΣΣΑΝΔΡΑ.

Ἰὼ, ἰὼ λιγείας μόρον ἀηδόνος·
Περιβάλοντό οἱ πτεροφόρον δέμας γὰρ

In these mournful reflections and anticipations Atalanta passed her time, until, at last, Lysisca summoned her to the thanksgiving ritual. The simple ceremony was soon performed: the frankincense was strewn on the censer, the lustral water poured; the hymn was sung, and the vows uttered beneath the rays of the luminary whose ruling deity they invoked. Lysisca left her on the terrace; and Atalanta lingered there till evening, in that deep enjoyment of the light and air, which can only be known after long confinement to a sick chamber. From the elevated place where she sate she overlooked the whole city—its fortifications, and the lines of the besieging armies, which were now drawn all round Platæa. No active hostile operations seemed then to be going forward; but the damaged state of part of the city wall told with what fury the battering-rams of the besiegers must have been

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Θεοὶ, γλυκύν τ' αἰῶνα κλαυμάτων ἄτερ·
Ἐμοὶ δὲ μίμνει σχισμὸς ἀμφήκει δορί.
ÆSCHYL. *Agamem.* 1146.

lately plied. The besieged had built up an inner wall behind this spot, in the shape of a half-moon; and working parties were busily employed on this and on other works of the fortifications. On the outside the besiegers had heaped up, so as closely to approach part of the city wall, a huge mound of earth, on which their battering engines were ranged, in evident readiness for a renewed attack. A trench and a ring of palisades had been formed all round the walls at about half a furlong's distance from their base. Larger bodies of troops than Atalanta had ever before seen, were quartered round the trench at regular intervals, so as to completely hem in the city and its garrison. The adjacent territory, with its half-demolished homesteads blackened with fire, with its uprooted olive-trees and vineyards, and its trampled and defaced corn lands, bore melancholy proof of the ravages of war. But to the southward Mount Cithæron reared his forest-clad summits in unsullied majesty; and Atalanta gazed earnestly on the moun-

tain side, and tried to discern the track along which she had passed on the morning of her arrival at Platæa.

While she thus mused, an armed footstep sounded on the narrow staircase that led up to the housetop; and a voice, which seemed not unknown to her, called, in a subdued tone, "Lysisca!" As Atalanta looked round, Leon stept on the terrace.

He paused, as if half pleased, half embarrassed at seeing her. "I sought Lysisca," he said, "in the hope of hearing tidings of your recovery. But I am still more glad to be an eye-witness of it."

"I thank you," said Atalanta, rising, and advancing to meet him. "I thank you for your friendly kindness." Then, observing that his arm was bandaged, she added, "I regret to see that you are wounded—not seriously, I trust?"

"By no means," replied Leon. "It is merely a bruise from a part of the parapet that fell on my shoulder when our enemies yonder tried to storm the wall. It is only

the shield arm; and I trust that it will be ready for service by the time it is wanted. Heralds are passing and repassing between us and King Archidamus, who is commander-in-chief of the besieging armies; and negociations are going on, which will keep things quiet a little longer. But it is *your* state, not mine, that we should speak of. I think that Lysisca, in her zeal to ensure your recovery, must have kept you close prisoner too long—I told her so several times."

"You told her so several times?" said Atalanta, with a half smile, which betrayed her pleasure at finding that Leon had been thus mindful of her.

"Certainly, Lady," replied Leon, gravely. "It would ill have become me, who have been, in some respects, the cause of your detention in this besieged city, if I had not daily assured myself that all was done for you that human aid could accomplish."

"Lysisca never spoke of this," said Atalanta.

"She obeyed orders. I was unwilling to

obtrude either my presence or my name on you. I was not aware of your being on the terrace when I came here this evening. But you look pale. Let me conduct you back to your seat."

Atalanta accepted the proffered arm; and when he had led her to her former place, she said to him, "There is one subject, on which I am very glad to have the opportunity of speaking to you. Can you tell me what has become of Melissa? You know probably whom I mean. My poor friend was carried off by the brigands from the islet beneath Mount Ægialeus at the same time that they seized me. When they landed with us on the Megarian coast, we were separated; and I heard the pirate-captain tell the part of his crew that was sent off with Melissa, to make their way either to Megara or to Corinth. Was she rescued? or has she been ransomed? or what has been her fate?"

"I regret," replied Leon, "that it is not in my power to give you any information

respecting Melissa. All communication between this garrison and our friends in Attica was completely barred by the advanced parties of the enemy within three days after I entered the city. And you may judge for yourself what chance there has been since of intelligence from any quarter reaching us through such a girdle of steel as has been drawn around Platæa."

Leon, while speaking thus, pointed to the lines of the besiegers, which now assumed a sudden appearance of menacing animation, as the troops of the contingent of each state turned out in full equipment from their tents, and drew up outside the trench for the evening parade. Atalanta rose from her seat, and gazed eagerly on the brilliant though formidable spectacle. Large phalanxes of heavy-armed infantry met her glance at every point, and still greater numbers of light-armed troops were ranged in looser order on the flanks and in the rear of each brigade of regular spearmen. In one part of the field, in the direction

between Platæa and Athens, and therefore in the most important and perilous post of the leaguer a powerful division of infantry was arrayed, which drew Atalanta's attention more than any other portion of the hostile force. The splendour of their armour, and of the scarlet uniforms, which they wore, was enhanced by the level rays of the setting sun, which now flashed full upon them. Atalanta distinguished also with gratification and surprise the soft even melody of the flutes, which made their only military music, and which contrasted strangely but pleasingly with the shrill clang of the trumpets, that sounded from among the other troops. And even to her unpractised eye the superior alertness and steadiness, with which this division went through its military evolutions, were clearly manifest. Leon's eyes followed the direction in which Atalanta was looking, and he felt a soldier's satisfaction in watching the perfect specimen of soldiership that was exhibited even though by foes. "They

are Spartans," he said. "No other troops from Peloponnesus, no other troops in the world could keep such an even front as that in wheeling. Look at their spear-heads. Not one of them wavers, or is out of the ordered plane. Now they charge forward as if to battle. 'Tis like the steady majestic advance of the ground-swell of the sea. But the Athenian galley can breast the crashing foam of the waves, and Athenian hearts can stem the surge of even Sparta's spears."

"It is a beautiful sight," said Atalanta. "Such must have been the men of Thermopylæ. What noble soldiers Lacedæmon sends forth!"

"They are indeed noble soldiers, and with their soldiership all their nobility of spirit begins and ends. For the sake of obtaining that perfection of discipline Lycurgus sacrificed alike the child, the boy, and the man. His Spartans grow up, with minds unformed and unornamented, into mere military machines. You alluded to

Thermopylæ; unquestionably the Spartans know how to die, but the Athenians know also how to live. That little band of my comrades whom, if you will come nearer to the parapet, you will see drawn up in the market-place, will face slaughter or famine when duty commands them, as firmly as the grimmest veterans of Laconia, though we do not sour our life, as they do, till its sacrifice becomes of little merit. And, even as to warfare, while we rival them by land, we surpass them beyond all rivalry on the grander element of ocean. There is not a man in yon phalanx, which King Archidamus is marshalling, who could rule a rudder, or hand a sheet, or even pull an oar. There is not one of my eighty Athenians, to whom the sea is not a second home. Would that we had any prospect of returning to it!"

While Leon said this, Atalanta and he had walked to the parapet of the roof so as to look down into the town immediately below them. All the little garison, except

the guards on the walls, was paraded in the market-place; but though their bearing was soldierlike and spirited, the contrast between their scanty numbers and the formidable amount of the masses of the besiegers was instantly and painfully apparent. Atalanta turned to Leon, and as their eyes met she asked, "What hope is there for Platæa?"

Leon shook his head. "We have repulsed," said he, "their efforts at storming, and we have baffled the attempts of their engineers to undermine our walls. It is a blockade that I dread. Famine is a more formidable adversary than the Spartan sword."

"But you are negotiating," said Atalanta.

"All mere pretence to keep them as long as we can from beginning regular works of circumvallation. They think that they have found some traitors within the walls who will deliver up the city to them; and for the sake of keeping up communication with their supposed partisans they carry on an insincere negociation with me and the other generals. But I am trapping the Spartan foxes

with their own wiles. The Platæans, whom they suppose to be traitors, are some of the staunchest men in the garrison, and are acting throughout under my instructions. When our enemies find how I have duped them, and how their huge host has been fooling away its time under the walls, their commanders may, perhaps, begin to quarrel, and march off to their several homes in mutual disgust. But I dread the steady malignity of those Theban fiends, whose troops you see to the north-east filling up so large an arc of the hostile circle. *They* will stir Heaven and Hades to induce the confederates to build regular walls all round us, and to leave sufficient detachments to man them during the winter.

"Is there, then, no hope of aid from Athens?"

"I hope that no attempt will be made to supply it. The force of Athens ought never to be risked in a pitched battle against such an army as we see around us. And as for breaking through the blockade if once

established, there are Corinthian artificers in yonder camp, who, with the abundance of labour which they can command, will hardly fail to construct such lines as will defy our sallies from within, and the attacks of our friends from without. No; our only hope of safety lies in our enemies' dissensions. When I say '*our* only hope,' I speak of the garrison and myself. *Your* safety, lady, I trust I have still the means of securing."

"You supposed, then," said Atalanta, looking gravely on him, "you supposed, then, that in questioning you respecting the state and prospects of the siege I was solely influenced by selfish considerations for my own safety? Leon, you once accused me of wilfully mistaking *you*. You are now mistaking *me*."

Before he could reply, Lysisca had joined them. Leon turned to her with thanks and compliments for her successful skill. The old attendant received them with pleasure, but warned Atalanta not to linger in the coming chill of the evening air. As they

were about to leave the parapet, Lysisca pointed to the enemies' mound, on which stood two officers, one of whom was conspicuous for the excessive richness of his armour and apparel, and also for the less advantageous peculiarity and appearance of his short, thickset, and somewhat bloated figure. He was evidently watching the elevated spot in the city, on which Atalanta, Lysisca, and Leon were standing; and he seemed to be drawing the attention of his comrade also towards them. As Lysisca pointed him out to Leon and Atalanta, she remarked, with a smile, "Our little garrison on this house-top seems to cause some excitement in the enemies' camp. Look, General, how that low-built, showy champion on the besiegers' mound is reconnoitering us. He can, I suppose, discern our forms clearly, but hardly our features, at this distance. Do you know who he is?"

"Yes," said Leon, "I observed him advance from the additional corps of Corinthian troops, which joined the besiegers last

week. He is their commander. I recognise his figure. He is Timarchus, the son of Timagenidas."

"Timarchus!" murmured Atalanta, and would have fallen, had she not been upheld by the watchful aid of Lysisca. The old attendant implored her to return to her apartment without delay; and Atalanta obeyed in silence. Leon assisted Lysisca in supporting her down the stair; and he noticed that her hand was icy cold, and that a more ashy hue of paleness had come over her cheek. He waited in the lower room until he was rejoined by Lysisca, who assured him that no relapse of the fever was to be dreaded, and that Atalanta was already rallying from the effects of the over-fatigue to which she had that evening been exposed. Leon then left the house, marvelling at the strange effect which the mention and the sight of Timarchus appeared to have produced on Atalanta. "What influence," said he to himself, "what influence can that dark and subtle schemer have obtained over *her?*"

## CHAPTER V.

Νῦν χρὴ μεθύσκειν, καί τινα πρὸς βίαν
Πίνειν.

ALCÆUS.

Hoc etiam faciunt, cum discubuere, tenentque
Pocula sæpe homines, et inumbrant ora coronis,
Ex animo ut dicant "Brevis hic est fructus homullis;
Jam fuerit, neque post unquam revocare licebit."

LUCRET., iii., 912.

Pone merum et talos. Pereant qui crastina curant!
Mors aurem vellens "Vivite," ait "Venio."

VERGILIUS. *Copa.*

LEON walked slowly and thoughtfully towards the fortifications. The guards had now been set for the first watch of the night; and it was his custom to inspect them. The sense of military duty soon roused him from his reverie; and Atalanta was forgotten, but not Timarchus, when he recalled to mind his plans for duping and delaying the enemy. Notwithstanding the

care that had been taken to weed the native garrison of all who were not staunch in the cause of Athens and of The Many, there was always a risk that some one or more might lurk within the Platæan walls, who at heart cherished the cause of Theban supremacy, and of aristocratic predominance. There was need therefore for the deepest caution in all the arrangements made by Leon for the illusory parleyings with the besiegers. Spies might be watching him and his agents; and, if the reports from such spies once roused the suspicion of the enemy, the whole scheme would be ruined. A Platæan officer, named Amyntor, chiefly communicated with the Peloponnesians, and assumed in those communications the character of leader of the conspiracy for betraying the city. It was agreed between him and Leon that they should appear in public to be on bad terms with each other; and that an opportunity should be taken for Leon, as superior officer, to reprimand Amyntor. Accordingly, on this evening,

Amyntor, who was captain of the guard on an important tower, left his post directly after the watch had been set, telling his second in command that there was no need of extreme strictness in time of truce; and that he should go to the banquet at Charidemus's quarters. Leon, who arrived at the post soon afterwards, expressed aloud great indignation at Amyntor's negligence; and after visiting the other guards he proceeded to the house occupied by Charidemus, one of the Athenian officers.

In the communications, that had lately been going on between the besiegers and the besieged, an Elæan captain of one of the Peloponnesian contingents had inadvertently alluded to a sea-fight, which had just taken place in the Corinthian Gulf, between the Athenian squadron under Phormio, and the combined fleet of the Peloponnesians. The Athenians heard this with alacrity and eagerness; and by adroit inquiries from some of the besiegers, whom they knew to be least zealous in the Spartan interest, they ascer

tained the fact, that their admiral had gained a brilliant victory with far inferior numbers over a large force of the enemy. It was forthwith proposed in Platæa to celebrate this joyous event by a dinner and a banquet; and though Leon and the other chief commanders knew the importance of economising all the city's stores, they were unwilling to do anything that might make others suspect that the pending negociations were mere pretences, and that the generals did not reckon on a speedy termination of the siege. The banquet was held accordingly; and both Platæan and Athenian officers were now drinking deep, the former as true Bœotians, the latter through joy at the prospect of returning to their own gay and festive city.

Leon entered the long banqueting-hall unobserved, and stood for a few minutes near a pillar, to watch the revellers. They were reclining on couches, ranged round the room, which had been decorated as richly with tapestry and plate as the resources of

the city allowed; but garlands were scarce and sere. The greater part of the couches were occupied each by two guests, but some held three or five. By arrangement Platæans and Athenians were intermingled, so as to prevent little cliques from being formed, and so as to keep up one general conversation. The meal had been finished; and at its close the customary libation had been poured out "To the good Spirit of good-fellowship." Two large bowls were brought in and placed, one at either end of the room; and in them the attendants mingled with a third of water the wine for the regular drinking of the evening. Thence it was distributed into goblets, placed on small tables in front of the couches. The circumstances under which the symposium was held, made it impossible to supply the amusements sometimes provided on such occasions by the introduction of hired players and dancers; but the old Greek custom was kept up of the revellers themselves contributing to mutual enter-

tainment by recitation, songs, and music. The lyre was the instrument preferred by the Athenians, inasmuch as the performer on it was able to use his voice at the same time. The Platæans retained their national music of flageolet and flute; the voice of a friend sometimes being added as an accompaniment. No symposiarch, or master of the feast had been appointed, but that post was kept vacant for Leon. Each of those present filled as he pleased, and drank as he pleased. Healths were freely pledged; and large cups were called for in honour of successive toasts. But the intellectual part of the feast was not swamped, as the bowls flowed faster and freer. Rather, in proportion as "the good wine did its good office" * mind flashed more and more brilliantly, as it clashed with other minds in joyous rivalry.

Leon had caught, as he left the street, the last notes of a Platæan flute, on which Alcimedon, son of Bias, the most renowned of all the musicians of Bœotia, was

* Southey's 'Madoc.'

playing. The Athenians, who had never before heard such melody produced from such an instrument, half rose from their couches in earnest admiration; and at its close they were loud in their applause of the performer. Numerous were the voices that pledged Alcimedon; and cup after cup was passed on to him, which the senders had drunk from, and which they requested him to drain with them in sign of special esteem and friendship. Alcimedon, in reply, bade the attendant carry the lyre to the Athenian Thrasyllus, and called to him—"Oh, Thrasyllus, son of Chærilus, thou champion stout in the strifes of oars, spears, and flagons, thou equal favourite of Athenè, Arès, and Poseidon, let us hear from thee a lay of your country's naval glories. It will be as great a treat to us Æolian landsmen, as our flute-notes are to you Ionian sea-rovers. But, first, pledge me in this bowl of Hercules." The Platæan, as he spake, took off nearly the whole contents

of a huge flagon. Then, pouring out the remaining drops on the ground, he tapped the inverted base of the flagon, and as it tinkled clearly, he exclaimed—"To Jove the Liberator!"

The bowl was replenished, and borne to Thrasyllus, who poured forth part of the wine as a libation "To Pallas Athenè. To the gray-eyed Pallas Athenè—the Goddess, who helps those, who have wit and courage to help themselves." He then drank moderately from the bowl, and gave it to the attendant from whom he received the lyre. "Excuse me, gallant Alcimedon," he said, "if I do not attempt to equal your prowess in the feats of Bacchus. You would soon make me unable to keep time with hand, foot, or voice. I will give you part of the sea-song, that was made just before the beginning of the war, when I served on board the squadron, that we sent to help the Corcyreans against the Corinthians. I mean the ten ships that

sailed first under Lacedæmonius, son of Cimon. We saw a little fighting, but not so much as we expected." Then, sweeping the strings of the lyre with a firm and free, though not highly-trained touch, into a common but favourite tune of the day, he began with a deep rich voice the ballad of 'The Oar.'

*Song.*—THE OAR.

1.

Oh the oar, boys, the oar is the weapon of the free,—
The oar that bids the battle-ship career along the sea.
The Spartan mid his helots may lord it on the shore,
But there's freedom for the sturdy hands that ply th' Athenian oar.
Then out with the oar, boys, bend to the oar;
Send her through the surges with the froth upon her prore.
The gale may howl ahead, and the sail may serve no more,
But our galley has her oarsmen, a hundred and threescore.
With a hissing wake behind, and a heaving wave before
In our might to the fight swing her forward with the oar.

2.

To the city of the Violet* came messengers of woe,
"Phæacia quails, Phæacia fails 'neath Corinth's vengeful blow."
Ho, kinsmen of the Grasshopper! † come from the Attic vallies,
To the rescue, to the rescue, ho! Come forth and man the gallies.
Haul down the good ship from the docks. Each bears a chosen chief;
And the son of our old admiral is leading the relief:
Our admiral, great Cimon, who taught us how to speed
To the pillage of the Cyprian and the slaughter of the Mede.
Now, tier on tier with even oar, and gratulating pæan,
Our saving squadron quits the shore for waters Corcyræan.

The Athenians present eagerly caught up the words, that expressed sentiments so

* No national epithet delighted the Athenians more than to hear their city called "The Violet-crowned Athens": Ἰοστέφανοι Ἀθῆναι.—See the *Equites*, 132, and *Variorum* notes.

† The old fashioned Athenians wore golden grasshoppers in their hair, to show that they, like those insects, were the genuine offspring of the Attic soil.—See the *Nubes*, 971, and the remarks of the scholiast.

dear to them all. They made a refrain of the last two lines of the first stanza; and the roof rang again and again with echoes of

"With a hissing wake behind, and a heaving wave before
In our might to the fight swing her forward with the oar."

When the excitement had a little subsided, Leon stepped forward. Many rose to greet him, but he waved to them to be still, and stood opposite to the couch on which Amyntor was reclining. Assuming a stern voice, Leon said to him, "Amyntor, son of Pagondas, have you been released or discharged from the command of the main guard at the Thespian gates?" Receiving no reply, Leon continued, "You are a deserter from your post. Hence, sir, to your duty. Or, stay, your presence there now is useless. Retire to your quarters. To-morrow I will consult the full board of generals respecting you."

Amyntor rose and departed, scowling and muttering as he went. The other guests looked at each other with an expression of vexation and dismay. Some rose to go away; but Leon detained them, saying "Do not let the revel be thus marred, but give me the right to issue some more pleasant commands. I see the high office of Symposiarch is vacant. I propose myself as candidate for it. As many as are of opinion that Leon should be Master of the Revels hold up your bowls and drink them off." A loud acclaim of laughter followed this speech, and the voting goblets were called into speedy action. "Now," said Leon, taking his station with an air of mock dignity, "now I am the great king among you. Down all of you on your left elbows, except Alcimedon and Cebes, who are to pay tribute to their sovereign with flute and flageolet."

The two Platæans, who were thus summoned to play, obeyed promptly; and the late harsh scene with Amyntor was soon for-

gotten. The lyre was standing on a table near Leon, who took it up, and said, "I indict and convict myself for having come late, and will pass on myself sentence of recitation."

He was no singer; but, after striking a few bars on the lyre, he half spoke, half chanted the Skolion of Praxiles:

Share my cup, and share my wreath. I'll live and love through youth with thee.
In my hours of sober sadness sage and solemn also be;
In my hours of merry madness be thou merrily mad with me.*

Leon then turned to a young Athenian who reclined near him, named Lysis, who was remarkable for the intellectual beauty and for the habitual melancholy of his features, and who seemed absent in mind from the merriment around him. "Dear Lysis," said Leon, "take the lyre, and let us hear the voice that always sounds

* Σύν μοι πῖνε, συνήβα, συνέρα, συνστεφανηφόρει·
Σύν μοι μαινομένῳ μαίνεο, σὺν σώφρονι σωφρύνει.

sweetly, though it has often made me think how true is the adage that

"Our sweetest songs are those, that tell of saddest thought."*

Do not sacrifice to-night to the Genius of sleep."

Lysis took the instrument from Leon with a grave smile, and said, "I never refuse a request from you, Leon; but you will gain little amusement from hearing my present thoughts. They are of the dread twin of the Genius you spoke of. But you have evoked the spirit, and you must bear with its outpourings, be they what they may." Rising suddenly to his feet, instead of merely assuming a half-sitting posture on the couch, as was usual when the song or recitation was given by a guest, Lysis took the lyre with a master's ready command. Preluding for a while, like old Demodocus

* I need scarcely point out that I have here antiquarianised a line of Shelley.

in the Odyssey, before he poured forth the beauty and the brilliancy of song,

" His left hand held the lyre, and in his right
The Plectrum struck the chords. Unconquerable
Up from beneath his hand in circling flight
The gathering music rose: and sweet as Love,
The penetrating notes did live and move
Within the heart." *

He then, with a voice of unrivalled richness and pathos, sang a poem of his own, a

SKOLION ON DEATH.

Ω Θάνατε, ὦ Θάνατε.
*Oh Thanatè, oh Thanatè.*

1.

Deep in this bowl I pour the wine—
Behold the bubbles leap and shine,
Now in bright circles interlacing,
Now vainly chaced, or vainly chacing;
Some to each other springing light
In mimic love, or mimic fight;
Some to the goblet's shadowy rim
Retiring sullen, slow, and dim;
But all, whether alone or blending,
In blank annihilation ending.
Such is our fate—whirled headlong hither,
We know not whence, we know not whither:
We only know we come to thee,
Ω Θάνατε, ὦ Θάνατε.

* Shelley's Translation of the Homeric Hymn to Hermes.

2.

Stern Genius of the realms of gloom,
Is there no echo from the tomb?
What are the dreams that haunt thy sleep?
Awake we thence to smile or weep?
I know not. This I know alone,
That while I live my soul's my own.
Whether for us the fair meads swell,
Th' Elysian meads of Asphodel;
Or by the Phlegethontine shore
For us the fire-waves gape and roar;
Or whether Lethe's weeds must cling
Rottenly round us stagnating;
Fearless and firm we come to thee,
Ὦ Θάνατε, ὦ Θάνατε.

No loud applause followed the song of Lysis; but the rapt attention and earnest gaze of the listeners had throughout attested the power of his voice over them. One only of those who heard him, showed impatience. This was old Crantor, a genuine conservative alike in religion and politics, and to whom Lysis's stanzas had seemed to savour strongly of the new sceptical school then gaining ground at Athens.

"By the great Goddess Twain," he exclaimed, "I would gladly see ostracised those who have taught you, young man,

such dismal doubts about matters, on which your brave father held cheerful belief. He died in battle, trusting to pass hence (as I feel sure he *has* passed) to dwell with Harmodius and Aristogeiton, and with the heroes who fought at Troy. 'Tis a shame that our evening should have worn away without the best national song of Athens being heard. Old as I am, I can manage one stanza." Crantor took the lyre as he spoke; and having first fortified himself by a deep draught from the wine-cup, he repeated the second stanza of the celebrated Skolion of Callistratus.

Our own Harmodius is not dead—
He lives with glorious Diomed;
In the far islands of the blest,
Where heroes take their joy and rest.
With Thetis's swift-footed son
He lives, and lives for ever on.*

The older Athenian officers, and many of the Platæans applauded Crantor's speech and song; but Thrasyllus sneeringly ob-

* Φίλταθ' Ἁρμόδι', οὔτι πω τέθνηκας.
Ἐν Νήσοις Μακάρων σέ φασιν εἶναι.
Ἵνα περ ποδώκης Ἀχιλεύς,
Τυδείδην τέ φασιν ἐσθλὸν Διομήδεα.

served, "Callistratus of course took his idea of the Islands of the Blest from Homer. According to Homer, Menelaus is entitled to eternal happiness, not because he is just, or brave, or devout, but because he is the husband of Helen. A pretty scheme of Divine retribution truly! in which a run-away wife makes her husband a demi-god." Alcimedon the Platæan replied, "Our Pindar's description of the Islands of the Blest is open to no such objection. I mean his ode on Theron's Olympian victory in the chariot race. We hold that a place among the eternally happy is only to be acquired by those, who have thrice gone through a stage of existence in this world, and thrice through a stage of existence in the world of spirits without sullying themselves by any iniquity. The same great truth is taught in Pindar's last dirge in commemoration of the warriors who died here fighting against the Persians. If Pammenes will accompany me on his flute, I will venture on a recitation of some of these lines." He proceeded as follows:—

"O'er the mansions of the blest
Day's eternal sunbeams rest.
Meadows spangled with the rose
Spread before their vestibule;
There each fragrant blossom grows;
With golden fruits the air is cool.
Some the lyre and dance delight;
Some the race and games invite;
Every form of bliss is there.
Some the flaming altars wreathe,
And bid the ceaseless incense breathe
Fresh odours through the air.
All these have closed a stainless life,
And placidly resign'd their breath,
Ending every toil in death.
For in Nature's final strife
The mortal body perishes;
But the animating spirit,
In which concentrated is
All we from the gods inherit,
Must imperishably live.
This, too, when in life we rest
No longer by the weight opprest
Of the dull and slumbering clay,
Often to the mind can give
Presages of coming fate,
Preludes of a nobler state,
Beams of a brighter day."*

* See the Fragments of the Θρῆνοι of Pindar, beginning:

Τοῖσι λάμπει μὲν μένος ἀελίου κ.τ.λ.
Ὀλβίᾳ δ' ἅπαντες αἴσᾳ κ.τ.λ.

"We are amusing ourselves rather gloomily," said Leon to those who were near him. Then, addressing the whole party, he called out, "Suppose we have some variety to our songs and recitations. Let us have a game at the Kottabos." "The Kottabos! the Kottabos!" shouted a chorus of voices, and forthwith preparations were made for the amusement. A large shallow ewer was set on the ground, and a line was drawn at a few yards' distance from it, at which each player in turn took his station. A small quantity of wine was placed in a little vase, which the player took in his hand, and his object was to throw this wine into the ewer without spilling a drop. If he failed, he was liable to a fine or forfeit, at the will of the master of the revels. The most skilful thrower received a prize out of these forfeits at the end of the game. It was also a kind of fortune-telling. The thrower, as he projected the wine, called on the name of his lady-love, or, at least, was bound to think over her name to himself. If

the thrown wine struck the centre of the ewer with a full and clear plash (λάταξ), it was a good omen for the lover's success; if it was thrown in so as to make a broken, uncertain sound, his chance was regarded as bad; and if the wine fell to the ground, his case was desperate. The attendants were busy all the time carrying round the drinking cups, and the mirth soon grew "fast and furious." Many betted high on some of the competitors for the prize, who were renowned for their skill at the game, and especially for their adroit twirl of the arm and wrist immediately before the wine was thrown out of the vase. A rotatory motion was supposed to be thus given to the fluid, which ensured its passage in an unbroken volume to the ewer. Many, too, were the jests, as the names of well known beauties of all classes and characters were called aloud by the throwers; and then came lively congratulations or jocular condolements, according to the love omen which was given by the cast. "Leon has not

thrown," exclaimed several voices, and the vase was ceremoniously charged with wine, and handed to the general. Leon took it good-humouredly, and stepped towards the throwing mark. As he advanced, he murmured, half unconsciously, the name of "Atalanta." Lysis alone overheard him, and Leon saw a quiet smile pass over the features of his young friend. A little confused at having thus betrayed himself, Leon lacked his usual skill in directing the Kottabos; but the wine reached the ewer, and he retired without marked failure. After the prizes were adjudged, and while the players were returning to their couches, Leon whispered to Lysis, "Do not reveal what you have heard. I ask it for the sake of the memory of Melanippe."

Lysis covered his face with his hands, and drew in his breath with a deep hissing sound. Then, wildly looking up, he said, "Oh, Leon, why recall such memories? Give me the lyre again. My heart must now find a voice, or break." Again the

melody of his prelude hushed all round into silent expectation, and the young minstrel sang a Song to the Dead.

1.

Had the Star, that in days of old
  Its soft light shed o'er me,
Ne'er sunk in the shades of death,
  How changed my doom might be!
I never had learned to sigh
  In solitary pain.
I might know the bliss to love,
  And feel I was loved again.

2.

Oh not a single grace
  Was o'er her features shed,
That Memory cannot trace,
  And raise again from the dead.
Not a tone of that sweet young voice,
  But thrills to my heart as clear,
As when its accents blest
  My unforgetful ear.

3.

I was a child when we met,
  And young when thy spirit fled.
The bitter soul-drops gushed
  When they told me thou wast dead.
Seldom until that hour
  Had grief won a tear from me:
And few have I shed since then,
  That did not flow for thee.

4.

I never breathe thy name,
  Though none are round to hear.
I dare not trust the air
  With the sound, that was once so dear.
Few know that I ever loved;
  None deem I love thee now.
Oh that thou still wert here,
  Or I were cold as thou!

5.

I have prayed with bended knee
  And vainly streaming eye
Once more thy form to see,
  Though at the sight I die.
Yet there have things been seen,
  That tongue may not declare:
I dare not think of the place,
  Or what was gazed on there.

6.

Oh if these are but dreams
  And mockeries of the brain,
Swift be the stroke of death
  To join me to thee again.
Better for ever sleep
  In the grave, where thy rest would be;
Than live for endless years,
  But fail to meet with thee.

"This is more dismal than ever," said Leon to himself. He then called to Thrasyllus. "Thrasyllus, have you nothing in

honour of Phormio and the victory which we are met to celebrate? But we know so little about the battle, beyond the fact that our side won, that even your active imagination can hardly have got a song under way yet."

"I can partly supply the deficiency," said an Athenian near Thrasyllus, named Eucles; "not, indeed, with any lines of my own, but with some scraps of a song, which has been made and sung at Cephalus' great feast at Athens for this very victory. I learned the lines to-day from an attendant on the Corinthian officers who came in under truce. I recognised the man. He was a runaway slave, who used to belong to Cephalus. I had once interceded for him, and saved him from a flogging or worse; and he was gracious enough now to tell me the account of the sea-fight, which had reached Athens before he deserted."

"Let me hear it, most excellent Eucles," said Leon. "It will be the best part of this evening's entertainment."

"I had already," replied Eucles, "told all I know to our friends here, before you came. Briefly stated, it happened thus:—The Corinthians and our other enemies got forty-seven galleys, and a large land force in transports ready in the harbours on the north of Peloponnesus for the invasion of Acarnania. They coasted along Achaia till they came nearly opposite to the mouth of the Evenus, where they meant to land their troops. Phormio watched them from the northern coast; but he had only twenty galleys against their forty-seven. Even with those odds in their favour they were afraid of us; and they tried to steal across the gulf in the dark. But Phormio was on them while they were sailing across just before daybreak. They then drew up in a circle, with their prows turned outwards, so that we should not give them the *diecplus*.*

* The ancient galleys were propelled in action solely by oars. Their prows, or beaks, were sharp and heavy, and projected below water as well as above, like those of our modern steam-rams. The great object of a galley with a good captain and helmsman, and with a

But Phormio thoroughly out-manœuvered them. You know that a fresh east wind generally blows out of the narrow part of the gulf about sunrise. Phormio waited for this, so that the fight should begin in rough

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crew of well-trained oarsmen, was not to grapple with an enemy and decide the business by hand-to-hand fighting—that was looked on as fit work for marines and land-lubbers—but to manœuvre with skill and speed, so as to charge an enemy amidships, or on the quarter. A blow dealt there by the beak of a galley in full swing from her 160 oars was pretty sure to swamp her adversary, and leave her *hors de combat*, though the stricken galley was seldom instantly sunk by the shock. The very light build of the trireme, and the buoyant effect of the lateral galleries, in which her upper tier of oarsmen was disposed, would generally keep the wreck above water for some time.

So long as a squadron of triremes kept their line with their bows opposed to assailants, charges of the kind that has been described were almost impracticable. The favourite manœuvre of superior seamen then was cutting the line (Diekplus). The assailing galley dashed rapidly between two of her adversaries; and then, smartly wheeling round, sought to charge one of them in the rear, or on the quarter while turning.

If the reader has near him the 'Blackwood' for December 1847, he is requested to refer to the paper in it on the Athenian navy, which I have referred to in the preface.

water, when, of course, the land-lubbers on board the Dorian ships were sure to foul their oars, and catch crabs without number." Then he formed in line, and pulled round them, threatening to charge them every minute, and frightening what little seamanship they ever possessed, out of their heads and hands. At last, when they were all floundering in a heap together, he gave the signal to wheel and to charge in real earnest. Our men had easy work of it. We took twelve of their galleys, sunk or swamped a score or two of their transports, chased the rest of them ashore, and we thoroughly broke their expedition. It was said, though, that they meant to try again; and Phormio had sent to Athens for reinforcements."

"And well he deserves them," exclaimed Leon. "A braver feat of seamanship was never heard of. But what are the lines about it that you mentioned?"

"I only learned a few," said Eucles. "My friend, the slave, had been employed to copy the words out for the singer at the

house of Cephalus; which was the cause of his remembering what he did. I got from him the description of how Phormio waited for the gale, and of how the charge was made. The lines are in that glorious anapestic metre, which Aristophanes lately taught us.*

Swift, swift, we glanced around them,
And in closer circle bound them,
  Still threatening the charge, still delaying:
For Phormio curbed our zeal,
Till the roughened main should feel
  The breath of the East o'er it playing.
Blow, blow, thou morning wind;
Why lingerest thou behind,
  On high when the day-god is soaring?
Come forth and bid the deep
From its level slumber leap,
  Its waters in majesty pouring.
Let the landsman dread their swell;
The mariner loves well
  The laugh and the toss of the ocean.
Long time the gale and we
Have been comrades o'er the sea:
  'Tis our help-mate in battle's commotion.
The shudder of the seas
Tells the coming of the breeze;

* I have used the fine English metre, which Mr. Mitchell invented for his translations of the Aristophanic anapestic tetrameters, but I have divided the lines.

The ripples are glittering brightly:
Soon the purple billows grow,
And their crests of foam they show,
As the freshening blast curls them lightly.
Swell higher, lusty gale;
The Dorian crews are pale,
Their oars in the vexed surges drooping;
While our circling galleys halt,
And veer for the assault,
For the death-stroke each mariner stooping.
With heads bent forward low,
With oars thrown back in row,
Trembling over the edge of the water,
In breathless gaze we watch
From our captain's lip to catch
The word for the charge and the slaughter.
'Tis given. Our oars dip—
With a light half-stroke the ship
Glides forward—the cloven wave flashes:
And pulsating with life,
Savage, active for the strife,
At her quarry the war-galley dashes.
On, mariners, pull on.
One glancing thought alone
Of the homes and the loves that we cherish;
For we know from pace like this,
As our prow may strike or miss,
Ourselves or the foemen must perish.
But our helmsman's skill is tried,
Our armed beak to guide
Where their quarter lies helpless before us;
And the thrilling jarring crash,
And the music of the smash
Tell our rowers that fortune smiles o'er us.

Look round upon their wreck:
Mark the haughty Dorian's deck,
How they reel in their armour along it:
While our bowmen ply each string,
And each javelin's on the wing,
Wafting death mid the braggarts that throng it.
Look, where our gallant prow
Struck deep the deadly blow,
Shattered oars, mangled oarsmen are lying:
The rent and started side
Sucks in the swamping tide,
And the surge drowns the groans of the dying.
The reddening ocean-flood
Drinks deep their hated blood;
It shall stream yet in richer libations:
We'll repeat the lesson stern:
Lacedæmon well shall learn
That the sea mocks her rule o'er the nations.

"The only other fragment, that I could learn, was from some trochaics at the end, which told how we captured one of their admiral-galleys, and how we have set her upon Mount Rhion as a trophy."

Tow her then along in triumph; haul her up on yonder shore;
There she long shall crown the headland, never stemming billow more.
To the gracious God of ocean votive offering shall she stand,
Telling of the deeds of Phormio and his bold Athenian band.

Sagest of his country's seamen, bravest captain of the brave;
Every coast shall hear his glory far as Athens rules the wave.
Choral lay shall long recall him. Long our battle-cry shall be,
Cheering on our charging squadrons, "PHORMIO AND VICTORY!"

"Phormio and Victory!" shouted Leon. "Let this be our last and most joyous libation, and let our draught to it be the deepest pledged to-night."

His orders were promptly obeyed; and when the last bowls were drained, the revellers strolled away in joyous groups along the streets, and walls of the little town, making the night-air ring with shouts of "Phormio and Victory!" which gave an angry start to the sentinels in the enemy's lines, and were heard even by those who were holding council in the tent of King Archidamus in the Peloponnesian camp.

## CHAPTER VI.

"I believe you are one of the very few that I have employed, who have acted faithfully to our cause; and while you have passed as a spy of the enemy, have never given intelligence that you were not permitted to divulge."—*The Spy.*

FENNIMORE COOPER.

Two Dorian officers were walking up and down the Corinthian quarter of the besiegers' lines, who heard with especial indignation the Athenian rejoicings over the late sea-fight. These were Timarchus, the Corinthian general, and Diphilus, the Megarian privateer captain, who had carried off Atalanta and Melissa from the Attic islet, and who had now come to the besiegers' camp before Platæa to claim his reward for that service from Timarchus.

Neither of them had been present, in the battle in the Corinthian Gulf against Phormio; but the armament, which the Athenian admiral defeated there, had been principally equipped at Corinth, and had been partly commanded by a near relation of Timarchus, who fell in the action. The greater part of Diphilus' favourite crew had volunteered to serve in the same Corinthian galley, and they had been drowned when that galley was swamped, or had been killed by the victorious Athenians, who never gave quarter to a man of Megara.

Timarchus uttered a bitter execration against the shouters of "Phormio and Victory!" and said to his companion

"Before a week is over those sweet voices shall be choked in blood."

"How can that be managed," replied Diphilus, "if this capitulation is effected?"

"I will soon find means to mar the capitulation," said Timarchus, "when once we have got possession of the town. Not one

of those chorus-singers shall see Dionysian stage again, either great or small."

"I hope you keep better faith with friends than with foes. Again I must remind you of the talent which you promised me if I carried off Atalanta."

"I pay for service that has been done; not for service that has not been done. You were to carry off Atalanta. Where is she?"

"In yonder town; in that high house up in the citadel. I have told you of the certain intelligence, which I have obtained of her being there. I showed her to you this very evening."

Timarchus knew well that Diphilus was speaking the truth; but he chose to appear incredulous. He replied:

"I know nothing about that. Eyes may be cheated as well as ears. You must have made quite money enough by the sale of the other girl. I know that the Thessalian slave-merchant, whom you found at Corinth paid well for her. They say that she was bought for one of the great king's satraps;

perhaps for the great king himself. Do you admire his taste?"

"I told you before, Timarchus, that my lieutenant Bianor managed the sale of Melissa. He never accounted to me for it. He was honest enough, poor fellow! but, as you know, he was killed on board your cousin's ship in that unlucky sea-fight last month. I was to have a talent for carrying off Atalanta; any other work that I might do, was to be on my own account, and was not to affect my bargain about her."

"Carrying off Atalanta meant carrying her off into my power; not carrying her off from one Athenian into the arms of another. Go and ask Leon for your money; he it seems has got her."

"She is in Platæa, within your grasp. You yourself speak of all in the city as being virtually in your power."

"Then you may speak of the money as being virtually within your purse. Not an obol will I hand over till the girl is safely lodged in my tent."

"At least pay me some portion now. Indeed, Timarchus, I would not press you thus were it not for my extreme need. The shipbuilder who repaired my galley is suing me; and the survivors of my crew are starving for want of their wages. They do not sue me; but they meet me with looks of hunger and reproach, that cut me to the heart. I dare not return to Megara moneyless."

"Perhaps I may save you the peril," muttered Timarchus.

The words and the tone were not lost on the privateersman, though he seemed not to notice them. Again he urged his entreaty for at least a few drachmas.

"Not a drachma, not an obol!" replied Timarchus. "A truce to these importunities. I cannot loiter with you longer. That man approaching yonder so carefully in the shade has important business with me; you must leave us to ourselves. And hark ye, Diphilus, not a word about your having seen him. You know my influence with your Council of Twelve at Megara.

Let me but give the hint, and there would soon be a quiet decree passed about you, that would make the settlement of all your accounts a short and simple matter. Withdraw now, before the man sees you."

Diphilus obeyed in silence; and Amyntor the Platæan now cautiously approached the place, where Timarchus waited for him. He was furnished with private pass-words by the chiefs of both sides, which ensured for him a passage unquestioned out through the gates of the town, and through the advanced sentinels of the besiegers. As he approached Timarchus, he said, in a low, clear voice, "Hermes the Profitable is a great god." The Corinthian replied, "And Autolycus seldom failed." Sign and countersign thus interchanged, they walked together towards the tent of the generalissimo, King Archidamus. Timarchus, notwithstanding his late arrival in the camp, took a leading part in the councils of the allies; which was gained by his daring, unscrupulous character and his genius for subtle scheming, as much as

by the importance of his city, and the strength of her contingent to the confederate army. He vainly endeavoured to lead Amyntor into private conversation respecting parties and projects in Platæa. Amyntor had been cautioned by Leon against Timarchus; and to all the latter's interrogatories he coldly replied that he would say what he had to say when in King Archidamus's own presence. Timarchus eyed him with a scowl of malignant distrust. Accustomed to practise trickery and treachery of every kind,—fond of weaving plot within plot, and despising straightforward lies as almost on a level with straightforward honesty in their degrading simplicity,—the Corinthian leader was prone to suspect in others the same complication of intrigue which he practised himself; and he sometimes defeated his own projects, and lost the game by his practice of over-finessing. Now, however, in thinking that Amyntor was playing a double game, Timarchus was on a right scent; and it was only in consequence of the extreme caution

enforced by Leon that the scheme of the Athenian and Platæan chiefs escaped detection. Timarchus had established a communication with a Platæan in the town, who, for a large bribe paid down and the promise of a larger sum, undertook to keep Timarchus informed of all important matters that could be learned within the town, and especially about the conduct of Amyntor. Whenever the Platæan spy had any information ready, Timarchus was apprised of it by two lights appearing at stated intervals in a particular window in the Platæan's house at midnight; and half-an-hour after the lights had been exhibited there, an arrow with a short scroll written in cypher, and wound round the head was shot into a particular spot near the Corinthian lines. Timarchus had always men on the watch for this intelligence: he had himself seen the signal-lights that night; and he knew that a scroll would be waiting for him at his quarters. He led Amyntor there; and when the Platæan remonstrated at not being taken immediately

to the Spartan king's presence, Timarchus pretended that he took a circuitous way thither for the sake of not attracting observation. He made Amyntor wait a few minutes in the entrance to his tent, while he himself entered it, and received from a confidential attendant the expected arrow. Timarchus unfolded the scroll, decyphered it, and learned from it what was literally correct, that there had been a public quarrel between Leon and Amyntor that night. Timarchus felt quite disappointed at the unartificial and uninteresting nature of the fraud which seemed to be really on foot. "This dull Platæan," he thought to himself, "has but Bœotian brains after all, and really seems to mean fair in his roguery. But Leon is no fool: he is sure to be playing a better game. It would be some gratification to out-manœuvre him, especially when Atalanta forms part of the stakes. But I must take my message-bird to Archidamus, and hear him pipe his notes, whether true or false before that sanctimonious old dotard,

and the rest of my worthy colleagues. Oh that I were but tyrant of Corinth and master of a good host of subject confederates! My sword should not know what my dagger was doing." Then, bidding Amyntor follow, Timarchus walked rapidly to the centre of the Spartan quarters.

The tent of King Archidamus would have been thought mean and bare by the lowest Asiatic state-officer; but still it was framed and fitted up with more regard to comfort, and even ornament, than would have been tolerated by Spartan severity in a king's house at home. It was part of the martial policy of Lacedæmon to allow her sons more indulgence of every kind when on a campaign, than was permitted at home. But King Archidamus was Spartan in heart, as well as by discipline; and though he allowed his attendants to make use of the national war-allowance in preparing his quarters, and in matters of commissariat, he was himself unaffectedly content with the plainest accommodation

that a shepherd-recruit from Arcadia would have demanded. He was not only a Spartan of the old school, but a Spartan of the best school. He had all the national admiration and love for law, for order, for courage, and for self-control; and at the same time he had little or none of the coarse and selfish disregard for human feelings, which his countrymen too often showed when the interests of other than Spartans were in question. He was also perfectly free from the strange greed for gold, which tainted many of the most eminent statesmen and generals of Sparta, though the wealth, which they so much coveted, could never be used or displayed by them, and could only be hoarded and gloated over as a forbidden luxury.

Notwithstanding the great authority which the war against Athens gave him as generalissimo of the main armies of the confederates against her, Archidamus regarded the war with deep regret, not unmingled with disapprobation. It pained him to see Greeks arrayed against Greeks, and

wasting in mutual destruction the valour and the strength, which, if directed against the barbarians, might have won glorious and solid advantages for the whole Hellenic race. He had personal friends among the leading Athenian statesmen, whose genius he admired, and whom he knew to be acting from high and honourable motives, although the principles of their policy might, in his judgment, be erroneous. He had done all in his power to moderate the angry animosity of his countrymen against Athens, and to prevent the outbreak of hostilities. He now carried on the war with the sincere desire of finding an opening for peace, and was thought to wish (like our own Essex in our civil war) "not to be too victorious." But he did his duty to his country skilfully, valiantly, and loyally. His general character for courage and integrity stood so high, and his exemplary observance of all Sparta's self-denying usages throughout a life now prolonged to very great old age had acquired for him such popularity and reverence, that

he could treat with disregard the party malignity of domestic enemies; even though they wielded the powers of the Ephoralty, that important magistracy, which exercised upon many Spartan kings the right of espial, of control, of sentence of fine, deposition, and even capital punishment.

Two of the five Ephori then in office were, according to custom, present in the camp, and were in personal attendance on King Archidamus. No council of war could be held without them: and their votes were commonly regarded as all-important, although they could not personally issue orders of command to the troops. Of the two Ephori before Platæa, one was Sthenelaidas, a rough, bold Spartan, whose short sharp speech for war had carried the day against King Archidamus in the great debate in the National Assembly, when immediate hostilities against Athens were practically voted by the Lacedæmonians. But Sthenelaidas, though he then spoke and voted against the declared wishes of Archidamus, loved and admired

the good old king, and would never join in any factious movement against him, such as Sthenelaidas' colleague, Menedæus, would willingly have attempted, if he had dared. This man, Menedæus had all the sordid avarice of a Gylippus, and all the cunning cruelty of a Lysander, without however possessing any of the high genius for command, which those two Spartan generals in later times displayed. Timarchus knew Menedæus thoroughly, and had by some prompt bribes secured his influence in the council. The only other officers present on this night were two Thebans, Pagondas and Daiphantus, who held office as Bœotarchs. The visit of Amyntor to the besiegers' head-quarters had been arranged beforehand; but had not been made known to any except King Archidamus, Timarchus, and the four others who have been named.

Archidamus, the two Ephori, and the two Bœotarchs had been waiting for some time in the royal tent, when Timarchus entered, leaving Amyntor in charge of the sentinel

on the outside. Archidamus disliked Timarchus; and one of the old man's reasons for regretting the war was on account of the influence which he saw that it would give to unscrupulous intriguers like Timarchus for promoting sedition, strife, and misery in every city in Greece. He questioned him sternly: "Timarchus, son of Timagenidas, why has the time of the council been thus wasted?" "My time," replied Timarchus, haughtily, "has been actively employed for the public good—yours, no doubt, has passively served the same cause. The Platæan officer is at the entrance of the tent. Is he to be admitted?"

Archidamus assented by a gesture, and Timarchus led Amyntor before them. The Platæan gave a rapid glance round the tent, and scanned briefly but keenly the countenances of the members of the council. In one of the Bœotarchs he recognised a deadly personal enemy; and their brows lowered as they encountered each other's gaze. Amyntor soon recovered his self-

possession, and stood with an appearance of calm indifference, ready to answer all questioners. But not a single movement or expression of feeling had escaped the watchful observation of Timarchus, who regarded him with continually increasing suspicion.

King Archidamus spoke: "Amyntor, son of Knemus, are you, and those who act with you, prepared, if we break off the truce to-morrow, and give the assault on the next day before sunrise, to open for us the Thespian Gate, as you promised?"

Amyntor was about to reply, but Timarchus interposed: "However much I may offend King Archidamus by interruption, there are some present who will appreciate salutary caution." He then went to the entrance of the tent, and satisfied himself that the sentries were at a sufficient distance to be out of hearing; and he directed Amyntor to stand near his hearers in the middle of the tent, and to speak low, so that if there were listeners on the other side of the canvas, his words should not be dis-

tinguishable by them. Amyntor complied, but with an air of impatience and irritation, which did not escape his director's notice.

"Our Platæan friend," said Timarchus, sarcastically, "is a man of good nerve. He runs most risk by this interview, if what passes here should get wind; yet he seems to think all precautions are mere annoyances."

Amyntor coldly answered, "I stand in the presence of King Archidamus, who is known to be a man of shrewdness, as well as of wisdom. I am satisfied that while he presides here no unnecessary risk will be imposed on me; and I am ready to meet all risks that cannot be fairly avoided."

"Reply," said the king, "to the question already put by me. If we break off the truce to-morrow, and attack next morning, will you have the promised gate open for me?"

Amyntor answered, "I cannot now pledge myself to do this so soon. Leon and I have had a quarrel this evening. He has

publicly reprimanded me, and threatened to bring me before a board to-morrow for neglect of duty. I do not think that this will lead to my losing my command. Leon, though hasty, is generous, and a show of penitence on my part will make him pass the matter over. But, still, what has occurred is likely to cause me to be watched and suspected a little for a few days. Fix the time for three days before next new moon; that is, for ten days hence. All doubt and alarm will by that time have been smoothed over. Make your assault an hour before daybreak. Have a picked column ready to charge right up to the Thespian Gate, where Erysimachus and I command. We will take care to have trusty friends under arms there with us, and no other. The bar shall be left unfastened, so that the gate will give to the least pressure; and Erysimachus and I will guard the towers on either side; and then the garrison along the wall will not be able to assail you as you pass in. All this can be done, and shall be

done ; but it cannot be done with certainty before the day I mention."

"You may retire, oh Platæan," said the king, "to the entrance of the tent, while we consider your proposal."

Timarchus said, quickly, "There are some questions, king, which may be usefully put to this Platæan before we deliberate. His zeal in our cause is, to say the least of it, new-born. He was most active on the other side when the troop of brave Thebans, who entered Platæa just before the war, was so treacherously and cruelly massacred. Was it not so, oh Pagondas, son of Damagon?" He addressed one of the Bœotians as he said this. The Theban officer replied, sternly, "It was certainly so. This Platæan's hands are red from nail to wrist with the best blood of the best aristocrats of Thebes. I know him for an enemy."

"Yes," answered Amyntor, readily, "I was your enemy, and a staunch friend to democracy and Athens, so long as democracy was a friend to me. But our populace and

their foreign friends have heaped on me slights and injuries, which I will avenge or die."

"What was the subject matter of your quarrel with Leon this night?" demanded Timarchus.

"Leon publicly reprimanded me for absence from duty on guard."

"It was, to say the least of it, indiscreet in you to awake Leon's displeasure and distrust on the eve of such a great movement as we are planning in favour of the Lacedæmonian, and against the Athenian cause,—a movement the success of which depends so much on the amount of personal influence which you yourself can exercise on your part of the garrison at the critical moment. Was there any special cause for your leaving your post on this occasion?"

"None, except that I wished to be at the banquet that has been given to-night in the town, in honour of the victory at sea which the Athenian fleet has just gained over you Corinthians."

"That wish appears to be rather inconsistent with the extreme zeal for the Peloponnesian cause, which has now brought you here. But let that pass. Were all the officers of the garrison at the banquet?"

"All, or nearly all at some part of it or other."

"And I suppose long and deep drinking was the order of the night?"

"I cannot say. Leon sent me away early. But you have heard what a noise they have been making, and you can judge for yourself."

"Who commands at your gate for the last watch of the night?"

"Your old friend Astymachus, son of Asopiadorus."

"He will be pretty sure to be one of the last that left the wine cup."

"Yes," answered Amyntor, with a laugh; "Astymachus has legs always ready enough to bear him to a drinking bout, but it is generally on other people's legs that he goes away."

"I have no further questions:" said Timarchus. He then called in a sentry, and desired him to keep watch over Amyntor outside. Then, returning to the part of the tent where the other officers kept their seats, he at once addressed them: "I am of opinion that all this Penelopean web of negociation should be at once broken off. Detain Amyntor in prison. Quietly give orders to the generals of division to have our troops in readiness an hour before daybreak; and then, as soon as there is light enough to guard us from running foul of each other, let us, without further waste of words, make a dash at the town. We are sure to succeed. Nine-tenths of the garrison, officers and all, will be asleep and stupid with the effects of this night's carouse. We have scaling ladders enough for a picked column to attack each gate with. Probably the wickets of some of them will be unclosed. I will lead a column myself, to show that I think there is but little danger. Let the attacks be well combined, so that all the columns shall

converge on the city at the same time; let our men move silently up to the gates, and then shout like Titans. Let us get ready for this boldly, and at once; and to-morrow's sun shall rise over us as masters of Platæa."

Menedæus and Pagondas were about to express their concurrence with Timarchus, when King Archidamus rose to his feet, and struck his staff upon the ground. "By the almighty Jove!" exclaimed the old man, —"by Him who sanctions treaties and avenges perjury! I will allow no such deed of impious treachery to be perpetrated or attempted by any soldier under my command. We have sworn a truce with the enemy; and a day's notice is to be given before that truce is broken off. May the enemies of Sparta, not her friends, practise such policy as yours, oh Timarchus; and may they thereby render the gods their enemies, and continue to us the divine power which the Pythian god has already promised. Son of Timagenidas, your proposal is rejected. I will not even put it to the vote."

Timarchus answered unabashed, "You men of Sparta are hard to understand. If it were your practice to seek to effect every thing by open force and fair fighting, you might be thought valiant simpletons, but your conduct would, at least, be consistent and intelligible. But you have no objection to compass your ends by the aid of fraud, provided you can get some one to be your tool in working the fraud. You are quite ready to employ this Platæan to betray his party and his country; and you know that the whole main object of the truce was fraudulent; and yet you stickle about some paltry forms and ceremonies, before you will fling this cloak of dupery on one side, and strike resolutely and remorselessly at your foe. You will grow wiser if this war lasts a little time longer. But for the present, you, oh king, are generalissimo of the army, and I know that I must sit tamely by, and see our interests sacrificed to your scruples."

"No one, oh Corinthian," replied the king, "no one would rejoice more than the

Spartans, if the good old custom could be restored of deciding all disputes of Greeks against Greeks by a fair fight in open field; as was done when three hundred of my countrymen fought the three hundred Argives to settle the disputed title to the Thyreatic territory. But long usages of war have now made it a rule that each belligerent state may avail itself of aid furnished by spies and deserters, and by factions among the enemy. Beyond that I will not go. To deliberately break an oath sworn by us to other Greeks worshipping at the same altars, and appealing to the same gods, would be an act of blasphemous wickedness, that might draw down the very mountains on our heads." The old king stepped towards the door, and himself summoned in Amyntor. "Platæan," he said to him, "we must submit to the delay which you recommend; but be cautious to do nothing to make further delay necessary. On the ninth day from this we shall formally break off the truce. We shall give the assault at day

break next morning; and we look to you and Erysimachus to keep your words about our passage through the Thespian Gate. Woe to you if you attempt to deceive us! Sooner or later Platæa must come into our power; even if the siege be prolonged as long as was the siege of Troy itself. The enemies of Sparta shall then find that she knows how to punish, as her friends will find that she knows how to reward. Now, depart, Timarchus, who led you hither, will see you in safety through our lines. The council is dissolved." The aged king bowed to his fellow-councillors as he said this; and then the Bœotarchs and the Ephori left the tent. Archidamus bade the Platæan follow Timarchus to the spot where he could pass back unnoticed to the city.

See," he enjoined them, "see that there be no private discussion of public matters between you."

The Corinthian and the Platæan walked a little way in silence. Timarchus took small heed of the Spartan king's parting

injunction; but he shrewdly guessed that Amyntor was acting under the direction of some superior, and that it would be vain to renew the attempt to learn any state secrets from him. But it occurred to him, "This man must surely know of Atalanta being in the town, and must have the means of speaking with her." He then assumed a tone of friendly good-humour, and said:

"Amyntor, it may seem strange to you that I, a Corinthian stranger, and hitherto an enemy to you, should ask you to do an act of kindness to me as to an old private friend. But it is really in your power to do it. I have deep need of it, and I have ample means for requiting it. I think that between two men of sense these are sufficient foundations for friendship: and they are the only foundations that can be relied on."

Amyntor looked at him with an air of wonder, and replied, "I cannot say anything more about the affairs of the city, now that I have left the council."

"I do not want you to talk about state

affairs," said Timarchus, with a smile. "You heard the parting commands of King Archidamus. I am too good a disciplinarian not to obey them. I want to speak to you about a girl, who is now in Platæa. See how I am giving you my confidence, before you have even promised to respect it. But I know that you are a brave soldier; and I know that a brave soldier will not lightly betray the trust which another soldier frankly reposes in him. The girl is half-Greek, half-barbarian. Her name is Atalanta. I will not weary you with a long tale of how I came to take an interest in her. Suffice it that I was mixed up with matters deeply affecting her and her family several years ago, when I was up the Euxine. Tell her that I must have speech with her. She must understand what her certain fate will be, if she is found in the city when we take it—and take it we shall and will, if not by our present plan, then by some other. Let her come forth to me as you have done.

You can get her a pass, and show her the way. Of course, she can wear a disguise. You can come with her, if you like. To-morrow, at midnight, I shall await you. I will take care that none of these Spartan twaddlers or Bœotian blockheads in the camp interfere. She *will* come—she *must* come, if you deliver my message aright. Tell her that Timarchus, son of Timagenidas, summons her; and that I adjure her to come by the shade of her dead father, Klymenus, son of Arcesilaus, and in the name of the Black Dæmon of the Broken Column of Sinope."

"I will deliver your message," said Amyntor, in amazement. "That is, I will try to do so; but I may not be able to see Atalanta."

"You will be able, if you are really willing. These gold Darics may help you in overcoming all common difficulties." As he spoke, he thrust a purse of gold into the Platæan's hand. He then added: "We must now part. Do as I have desired, and

half the spoil of the city shall be yours. You may trust my promises. I have more real power in this camp—aye, and in many a council-chamber throughout Greece —than Bœotarchs, Ephori, or King Archidamus."

## CHAPTER VII.

But she, with sick and scornful looks averse,
To her full height her stately stature draws;
"My youth," she said, "was blasted with a curse."
TENNYSON. *A Dream of Fair Woman.*

AMYNTOR, on re-entering Platæa, proceeded towards a house in a part of the town, that was at some distance from the gate through which he had passed, and which was also remote from both his own and from Leon's quarters. The Athenian commandant had already gone thither, and was waiting his arrival. Both Leon and Amyntor took the greatest possible care to observe that they were not followed or watched, as they repaired to the appointed place of their

meeting, which was at the house of a citizen, whom they could thoroughly trust.

Leon had thrown himself on a bench in the main room, and was sleeping deeply when Amyntor entered. The Platæan officer hesitated a little before he roused him. His straightforward impulse had been to acquaint him immediately with all that he had heard both in the tent of King Archidamus, and during his subsequent conversation with Timarchus. But, on recollecting the nature of the Corinthian's message to Atalanta, and the solicitude which Leon was known to show respecting that lady, Amyntor felt that the duty of repeating to him the terms of such a commission was neither easy nor agreeable. At last, tired with waiting, he slightly struck the hilt of his dagger upon the table. Leon started up at the sound, and recognised him immediately. "Tell me, excellent Amyntor," he said, "tell me, quickly and briefly, all that has passed."

"King Archidamus consents to wait for

the ten days that I stated to be necessary for the working out of the plot."

"Excellent tidings. Ten days' delay is of countless value. Have you aught else to tell me of?"

"Timarchus was in the council. He questioned me sharply. This was when I first went into the king's tent. I was turned out while they deliberated. I could hear voices high, as in anger; but I could not distinguish words. When I was led in again, Archidamus gave me the answer which I have reported. I think that Timarchus suspects us."

"Very likely. Suspicion is a second nature in one, who always deserves it towards himself. But he is a dangerous enemy in such a crisis as the present. We must abate no caution, and be ready to receive an attack at any moment. And now, good-night, brave Amyntor, or rather good-morrow. The morning-star is glimmering in the east."

"General," said Amyntor, after a slight

pause, "I have more to report. Timarchus charged me with a private message to deliver within these walls—do you see this purse of gold?"

"Fifty Darics—a good round sum. Is it the Corinthian's money?"

"Yes. Timarchus gave it me, with the promise of half the plunder of Platæa when the city is taken."

"So he thought to bribe thee, oh most noble-hearted man! Thus do knaves, like Timarchus, ever outwit themselves by judging others from the mirror of their own vile hearts. Who is the man that you are to act with as your confederate here?"

"No *man*. My message is to be given to a lady—to Atalanta, whom you rescued from the brigands in the pass. The gold is to bribe the attendants with."

Leon started back at the mention of Atalanta's name. The idea of any intimacy existing between her and Timarchus was unutterably repulsive to him; but he remembered the scene of the preceding evening,

and her agitation at seeing the too well-known Corinthian. He sat down and pressed his hands over his brow. Amyntor was about to continue his narrative: "Timarchus charged me to tell Atalanta—" but here Leon sprung up, and waving his hand hastily, commanded him to say no more. Then, in a more composed voice, he added, "Forgive me, Amyntor, if I seem hasty and discourteous. There is a little fever from my wound hanging about me, and I suppose the wine of this night has aggravated it. Pardon me for a moment, I shall soon be myself again."

He resumed his seat, and bent his head down in anxious thought. Jealousy was his first feeling, mingled with a fierce curiosity to know the substance of his rival's message to Atalanta, and a fixed resolution to thwart their plans, whatever they might be. But better feelings soon prevailed. "I will never," thought he, "play the spy upon her. I will trust her, or, at least, act as if I trusted her, to the very last." He then looked to-

wards his companion and said, "Amyntor, I know that you never will betray me, either as your general, or as your friend. I know, too, that you will never be party to any scheme or intrigue, that may endanger the safety of the city. I will not hear the words which you are charged to repeat to Atalanta. They were intended for her only. It were dishonest in me to receive them. I do this out of no regard for him who sent them, but out of regard for her to whom they were sent, and for you, by whom they are conveyed. I will write a direction to Lysisca, that will obtain for you an interview with Atalanta before noon. Deliver your message to her; and do your best to execute any orders which she may give you in consequence. Do not come and tell me what those orders are. I wish to hear nothing about them. Do not in any way allude to the subject when we meet. You may only state to her from me that I shall not come again into her presence unbidden; and now say nothing more to me about it. Keep the gold for the public

service; it may be of use to us if more of these manœuvres are attempted. Your hand once more—not in pledge of faith, no need of that—but as the hand of a kind friend."

Amyntor wrung his hand in silence. Leon wrote a brief note to Lysisca; and they separated, each for his home, while the first crocus-streaks were opening in the eastern sky.

Amyntor gladly took the opportunity of slumber, after the wakeful and eventful night that he had passed. But about two hours before noon he was at Atalanta's door with Leon's letter, which he handed to Lysisca. She read it; and requesting Amyntor to wait awhile, she went with it to the apartment of Atalanta, who received it with great surprise. It was very brief. It merely informed Lysisca that the general particularly desired that the bearer should have an interview with Atalanta alone, if the Lady's health permitted it.

"Who," said Atalanta, "is the bearer of this strange request?"

"It is Amyntor—one of the best and bravest of the Platæan officers. There is no fear of any evil practice when he comes forward."

"I will see him in the hall below. Inform him, Lysisca, that I will come to him there; and do you take care that no listeners are near. There seems to be some mystery; and caution may be useful."

Retaining Leon's letter in her hand, Atalanta descended to where Amyntor was waiting. She entered the hall, and stood before the Platæan officer with a queenly or (as Amyntor long afterwards described it) with a statuesque dignity, which awed him, as if in presence of one of the Olympians. Motioning him to resume his seat, she remained standing, and said in a calm commanding voice "You are, I believe, Amyntor, an officer of the Platæan part of the garrison, and you have brought this note from Leon the commander?"

"It is so, Lady."

"For what purpose have you sought this

interview with me? Have you any order to deliver from your general Leon? Is it anything urgent? Is there any cause why Leon does not deliver it himself? He usually visits this house, which was intended to be his head-quarters, once a day."

Then, perceiving that the Platæan hesitated to answer, she said more imperiously, "You must deliver your message immediately, or I shall retire. I cannot prolong an interview, that is strange and almost unseemly, even at the bidding of your general."

"I bring no message, Lady, to you from Leon. I bring a message, and a strange one, which was received by me last night in the enemy's camp."

"You, a true Platæan in the Peloponnesian camp at night?" Then, recollecting what Leon had told her about the fictitious negociations, she added—"Yet it may have been so, and all may be well. You are acting under Leon's orders?"

"I am, Lady, both in my visits to yonder camp and in my present visit to this house. I must in turn put a question. You evidently know something of this matter of a Platæan visiting the camp yonder—is it from Leon that you know it?"

Atalanta coloured slightly, and paused for a second or two before she replied "It is from Leon that I know it; and I know that Leon is to be trusted."

"Trusted to the death, and served to the death!" exclaimed Amyntor, warmly.

Atalanta smiled. "Proceed," she said, "and repeat to me what your unknown informant in the lines has told you for me or of me."

"My informant, lady,—that is, he who charged me with a summons to you to meet him,—is the Corinthian General Timarchus, the son of Timagenidas."

Atalanta reeled as from a blow. Catching hold of the back of a couch, she steadied herself with difficulty; and, sitting down, said in a changed and hollow voice "Pro-

ceed, oh Platæan! I *must* hear, hateful as they are, the words of that evil genius of my destiny."

Amyntor reported to her accurately all that had passed between him and Timarchus. When he repeated the words in which Timarchus summoned her to him in the name of the Shade of her dead Father, and in the name of the mysterious Dæmon, Amyntor observed that Atalanta shuddered, and that her cheek became of ashy paleness; but she uttered no sound. After a few minutes' silence, Amyntor said to her, "Lady, I fear that I have given deep pain; but I have only been doing my duty."

"Yes, Platæan soldier, you have only done your duty. You say that Leon refused to hear what it was that the Corinthian desired you to say to me?"

"Yes, Lady; and, moreover, he has strictly enjoined me not to report to him whatever answer you may think fit to return to this strange summons. Leon commands me to execute to the very best of my ability

and with the strictest secrecy any orders that you may think fit to issue."

"You have the means then of seeing the Corinthian again?"

"I can see him again, if it be necessary; but I would rather that it should not be so. I think that he suspects the undercurrent of our policy; and, though I hope I am no coward, there is something in Timarchus which inspires in me at the same time both detestation and dread."

"You have judged him rightly. He is, indeed, both hateful and terrible. He is all-malignant and almost all-powerful, like the evil spirit whom he invokes against me. Beware of him for your own sake, and for the city's sake. Go not near him, save in battle; and oh! if he then comes within the reach of your spear or sword, strike hard, strike home, strike to his sure slaying. Neither will I go near him. I do not defy his threats. Alas! I tremble before them. But horrors would follow a meeting with him, far worse than aught that angry ghosts

or evil Dæmon can inflict. Tell Leon that you have seen me; tell him what you have said to me; and tell him all that I have said to you. Nay, I must be obeyed in this. Give Leon back his note to Lysisca. See, I have written across it the word "listen." When he sees it he will hear you out. And tell him that it is my desire that he repair here at sunset. Now, send Lysisca to me. My strength is fast failing. I do not ask for any pledge of secrecy or faith from you. That would imply lack of confidence; and I trust you implicitly. Go hence and prosper, in the name of the Heavenly Powers, the Quellers and the Averters of the evil that is on the earth and under the earth. Deeply do I myself need their aid."

Amyntor obeyed her, and departed. All that had taken place was narrated by him to Leon, who listened with sorrow on account of the painful mystery that seemed to hang over Atalanta; but still he listened not without some mixture of pleasure at the confidence which she evidently placed in him. He was

at the house at the appointed time, and found Atalanta on the terraced roof. She was seated there; and a second chair had been placed, which Atalanta desired him to occupy. She said, "I have much to tell you; and my tale will be a sad one, and probably an embarassed one. But I owe it both to you and myself that the half-knowledge of my former life, and of my present perils, which has been forced on you already by accidental circumstances, and which is likely to make you entertain injurious suspicions, should, at any rate, be changed into a full acquaintance with all the past. If I seem egotistical, and if I am wearisome in telling you so much about my early life, recollect that you have yourself caused the telling of this tale to you by saving my life, and by bringing me here."

Leon began to assure her earnestly of the deep interest that he took in all that affected her; but she smiled sadly, and raised her finger in sign that he should spare his protestations.

"I am myself to blame," she said, "for having fallen into the use of conventional phrases, which imply an indifference on your part towards me, whereas I do not think that such indifference exists. You would not have caused so much care to be taken of me so long, if you had not yourself cared for me. Do not misinterpret my words. Receive them in the same spirit in which they are spoken, of frank, unaffected goodwill between one human being and another. Indeed, I believe that we all take a permanent interest in even an inferior animal, in a dog, or in a bird, if we have happened to save its life. I know you will listen to me with kindness, if not with gratification. But I must impose a rule on you. Do not comment on what I say till all is spoken. Until then do not question me, or address me,—not even if I halt and pause long in my tale. There is much in it that may well make me pause."

"You know that my father, Klymenus, son of Arcesilaus, was a Greek citizen of Sinope. He had come thither from Hali-

carnassus, his birthplace. You also perhaps know that my father married the daughter of a chieftain of one of the mountain tribes of the Caucasus. She had been captured and had been sold as a slave. Her name was Marpessa.

"It was not merely to tell you of things like this that I brought you here; but to tell you how I met, and how I came under the influence (for, alas! I am under the power, though not wholly so) of that Corinthian. I cannot bring my lips to utter his name; but you know whom I mean—the Corinthian, who sent Amyntor to me with the summons of this morning.

"I was very young when we were at Sinope; but I was old enough to observe, and to feel, and to remember. My father's marriage with a princess of the Caucasus (for such my mother was, however much the narrow pride of Hellenism might contemn her as barbaric) had given far more offence to her family, and to all the nobles of her clan, than the Greek settlers in the

colony felt, or affected to feel towards my father for an alliance with a barbarian. There were frequent and malignant hostilities between the colonists and the tribes near Sinope; but the native mountains of my mother's clan were too distant from the city to make any attack by them upon the Sinopean Greeks a probable danger. How my parents had met and loved might make a tale of interest, but too long for introduction here. My earlier recollections are of a happy, a very happy life near the southern shore of the Euxine; of a brother, who was my playmate on its sands, and amid its rocky caves; of the loving, majestic face, the warm, caressing arms, and the sweet old native songs of a stately lady, whom we called 'mother'—one whose like I have never seen since those days, and never shall see on earth again. My father, too, was then, as ever, good and gracious to all around him. We had all wandered one summer evening to a greater distance than usual, along the beach eastward of the

town, and we had walked round a headland, so as to be quite out of sight of the walls. The spot which we had reached was wild and beautiful; but there were recollections and legends associated with it, which caused it to be generally shunned, at least by all of Hellenic race. The cliffs there recede a little from the sea; and a rivulet from the inner land makes a precipitous but devious descent through and over the rocks, till its glittering waters are lost in the yellow sands below. The shrubs and stones that overhang the greater part of the little cataract, are very abundant and lovely; but at one angle of its course it passes under a dark recess, where the barren crags seem to frown in gloomy anger on the intrusive waters. This spot, according to the tradition of the native tribes, was haunted by a Dæmon, that delighted in human blood, and to whom they used to sacrifice the choicest of the prisoners, whom they took in war. Sometimes, it is said, they sacrificed there their own children, when a

famine or a defeat had announced to them that the anger of the evil spirit was kindled against them, and that some special propitiation was required. The native name of this goddess of ill meant 'The Terrible One;' and, as the Greek word Mermera which has much the same meaning, was similar to the native word in sound, the place was usually called by the Sinopeans 'Mermera's Glen,' or the 'Glen of the Black Dæmon.' This last title was due to an ancient idol that had stood there—an idol made of ebony—and which represented the Dæmon as of gigantic size and hideous aspect, with projecting fangs and long claws curved inwards, on which the barbaric priests used to fasten the still living human victims, and then to mangle them to death with slow and elaborate tortures. When the Greeks first colonised Sinope, it was thought desirable to include this place within the fortifications. They overthrew the idol, and began to build a temple near the spot to Apollo the Purifier. But the

barbarians by a sudden night attack surprised and killed the working party; and on the next morning, while the chief men of the colony were assembled there to give orders for the burial of the slain, and for the restoration of the work, a mass of rock from near the spot where Mermera's image lay, fell on the single column of the temple which had been completed, and broke the upper portion of it into shapeless fragments. Terrified at the omen, the colonists abandoned the temple works, and gave up the plan of extending the walls to that unhallowed scene. The rapidly increasing power of Sinope prevented the hostile tribes from re-establishing their old dreadful cult there; and the grim image of the native Dæmon still lies there on the ground, which in olden times was saturated with the sacrificial blood that flowed in honour of it. A little lower down the cliff stands the broken remnant of the Hellenic column. I speak of the place as it was twelve years ago. It is probably little altered."

Atalanta paused in her narrative for a few minutes. Then she said, "Be not impatient with me if my heart and voice falter as I approach the catastrophe of the tragedy of my childhood. How well I remember the scene! It is vivid before my eyes as if it all happened but yester-evening. My father, with the true instinct of a sculptor, was busily examining the proportions of the broken column. My brother and I had been wreathing garlands from the flowers near the upper part of the stream. We brought them to my mother, and playfully strove to decorate her with them. She smiled sadly, and put them aside. I believe she was saddened by thinking of the horrid rites that had been practised at the place, and by reflecting that some of the men who practised those rites, were her own ancestors and near kinsmen. Seeing her unwillingness to share as usual in our childish merriment, we had laid the flowers down and had begun playing with a ball. My brother, in throwing it towards me, struck with it accidentally a

stone that was on the sands, and the ball, bounding transversely from it, disappeared behind a projecting ledge of rock. I ran round the rock to recover the ball; but was instantly seized and held firm by a strong hand, and another hand was placed over my mouth, so as to check any cry of alarm. I saw a number of tall forms around me. They were men armed, not as the Greeks arm, nor quite after the fashion of the barbaric tribes that generally came near the town. The ornaments of the helmets of these warriors were different from aught that I had ever seen before. Their garments were of the skins of wild animals, and they had short double bows, and quivers full of gaudily feathered arrows. They were warriors of the Caucasus; they were chosen champions of my mother's clan, who from information gained from a slave in our household had come to the neighbourhood of Sinope, and had been lurking round its walls in watch for an opportunity for seizing and carrying back the princess of their tribe, and

of avenging on my father the insult which he had inflicted on them. I did not know at the time, but I heard afterwards the cause why they had not seized on us directly that we entered the lonely glen. From their place of ambush they could discern a Greek penteconter,* that was pulling eastward along the coast, near to the shore, and they intended to wait till she should be out of sight and hearing before they commenced their attack. My appearance among them hastened them into action. Two of them dragged me along with them, threatening me with death if I resisted or spoke, while the others, at their leader's command, sprang to the summit of the rocks and poured a volley of arrows, beneath which my father instantly fell, as did also the only attendant who was with us, and who had been brought to carry us children if we felt weary. The Caucasians then secured my mother and my brother. 'The slave is dead,' said their leader, turning over with his foot the body

* Fifty-oared galley.

of our attendant. 'The Greek himself, who did us the wrong, is only wounded. He has life enough in him to feel tortures. 'Tis well. He shall die in our mountains before the assembled chiefs of our race; but even before that he shall undergo agony worse than any bodily pangs. We will sacrifice this boy, here, before his father's eyes. The girl may be taken away alive with her mother.' As he spoke, they carried my brother to the place where the black image lay. They were about to uprear the hideous idol, but their leader called out, 'No time for ceremonious reverence to great Mermera is allowed to us. The Greeks from the penteconter may be on us if we loiter. Bind the boy to the sacred image itself as it lies there. His blood shall soak into the bosom of the holy ebony, and shall gladden great Mermera in wrathful exultation over those thrice-accursed Greeks, her ancient foes, and ours also.' As he ordered, so they bound my brother over and along the hideous shape that lay on the ground. My father, helpless

from the effects of his wound, though fully sensible, was carried up also to where the idol lay, and was held close to it, with his head forced downwards over my brother's body, so that, when the murderers stabbed, the jets of the child's blood should come full in the parent's face. My mother and I, disregarding menaces and blows shrieked vainly to the captors for mercy to the boy, when suddenly a loud shout overpowered the voices of both torturers and victims, and the crew of the Greek penteconter appeared at the head of the glen. They had landed, not on the sands at the foot of the glen, as the Caucasian chief had thought probable, and where he had stationed some of his best men to oppose them; but they had landed in a cove a little to the eastward, and thence they had followed a side path to the top of Mermera's Glen, which brought them on the scene at the very moment when the knives glittered high to be plunged into my brother's body.

"The rescue came in time. Our deliverance from death was accomplished. But that

deliverance was my condemnation to evils worse than death.

"The captain of the Greek crew that saved us, was the Corinthian Timarchus, son of Timagenidas."

Atalanta with difficulty articulated the last words. She then paused; and after a long interval, during which Leon was respectfully and sorrowfully silent, she thus continued her narrative:—

"The gratitude of us all to those who had thus preserved us, was naturally great, and was fervently expressed. That of my father was unbounded. He pledged himself, and he devoted us all to serve Timarchus in aught that he should need or desire. He was not content with praying blessings on us, if we obeyed him, but he invoked both the Hellenic god, whose unfinished shrine was near, and the foreign dæmon to whom my brother had so nearly been sacrificed; and he implored them to haunt us, and to wither us up, body and soul, if we disobeyed his mandates, and ever neglected the behests of

Timarchus. He required us to join then and there in his vow and in his anathema; and we did so. I dare not recall to my memory the form of words that my lips then pronounced. I have sometimes tried to convince myself that my father, fevered by his wound, and half-maddened by excitement knew not what he did or said. I have tried to argue to myself that the vow of service to the Corinthian was meant to apply principally, if not exclusively, to my brother, from whom, when arrived at manhood a man might honourably receive effective aid amid the countless wars, revolutions, and seditions which distract the Grecian States. But, alas, almost the last words that my father on his death-bed a few years ago spoke to me, then his only child, were to remind me of the vow to Timarchus.

"I will not weary you by any detail of other matters which befell our family at Sinope. A few years after the dreadful scene in Mermera's Glen, my mother perished of a fever that half desolated the city. My

brother also was taken off by the same epidemic. My father then migrated to Athens, taking me with him. Some years passed away before we saw again the fatal Corinthian; though my father in the interval showed his remembrance of him by presents of statuary, some of which were the most valuable works of art that my father's chisel ever produced. At last, in an evil hour, the Corinthian, who had come to view one of the Athenian festivals, thought fit out of idle caprice to visit our dwelling-house. He was, or, he pretended to me that he was struck by my appearance. He courted our society. He completely gained my father's confidence; and he delighted him by a display of admiration, not altogether feigned for my father's genius as a sculptor. But I soon found that I was the real object of his visits; and that he sought me from the vilest motives. Be silent—command yourself. I will try to command myself also. I longed to denounce him to my father, and to obtain a withdrawal of

the vow that had been laid on me. But the old man's health was failing; and I kept deferring a disclosure, which I knew would be a terrible shock, and perhaps a fatal shock to him. While I still hesitated and delayed, a rapid and deadly malady came on my father. But, as I told you, before he died, he ratified and repeated the terrible injunctions that had been laid on me. My enemy's persecutions have been incessant. As you know, he has wealth; he has power; he has great though perverted intellect; he has a hound-like tenacity of purpose; he is not restrained by any law, or by any faith in aught human or divine, though he well knows how to avail himself of the creeds of others. The outbreak of this great war, which is now raging, brought to me temporary relief, for no Corinthian now dares to enter Athens. He has bidden me repeatedly to come to Corinth to reside there. I refused; for I knew well how little safeguard the oligarchical tribunals of that city would give a helpless Metic girl

against a wealthy and influential noble such as Timarchus. The Athenian democracy, with all its faults (and they are great and many) curbs the violence of all wrong-doers with stern even-handed justice; and I was safe while within your great city's walls. But now I find myself again compassed in my enemy's toils. Again he summonses me. Again he echoes my dreadful vow. Again he evokes memories and threats from the dead, that fill both my waking and my dreaming spirit with phantasms of agony and terror. I know that I ought to reason this down. Perhaps if I heard of similar weakness in another person, I should haughtily refer to reason and to science as certain remedies of such illusions. But I am powerless to liberate myself. I cannot cheat my conscience by the paltry plea that an oath, so stern as mine was, is no binding oath. I vowed it knowingly; and though I was very young then, I repeated it when no longer childishly young, at my father's bidding at his death-bed. I thought that I

should soothe his dying moments by such obedience, and for that purpose, and at that moment I would have said or done almost anything.

"I do not fear the anger of the bright and pure Olympian god, because I break the oath wherewith I am bound, rather than keep it for the furtherance of foul abomination. I look to Apollo as my protector. He knows that if I were required to keep my vow by laying down my wealth or my life for the Corinthian, I would willingly do so. He knows that in the summons now sent to me, and in my refusal of it, I am more sinned against than sinning. But I know not what dreadful agency the Evil Dæmon of the Pontine Glen, to whom I have also enthralled myself, may not exert over me. It is true that I have heard Diotima, the Inspired Prophetess, her who is wise in the lore of many lands, say that the gods of the Barbarians are not the gods of the Greeks; and that they have no power over those of Hellenic race, save in

cases, where their peculiar seats are intruded on by rash adventurers. But I am half of barbaric race. The blood of the old worshippers of Mermera flows in my veins; I know not whether she may not claim me as her own. And even in the Greek creed, in which I have been reared, I hear of, and I feel the power of the Dread Goddesses, the Eumenides, whose special function it is to punish both here and hereafter the disobedient child, and to execute a parent's curses, merely because they *are* a parent's curses, and even though uttered in haste, in unwise anger, or in mistake.

"Cold comfort is there in philosophy. I shrink from the followers of Democritus, who say that we are nothing but combinations of atoms, soon to be dispersed through the great void; and that we are surrounded, while we live, by effluences and spectres, beneficent or dreadful according to mere accident. I find nothing in the reveries of Parmenides or Empedocles, with which I can sympathise, except their lamen-

tation over the impossibility of finding out truth. My repugnance is invincible towards the questioners and jeerers, who deny the reality of Honour, Virtue, Justice, Love, Beauty, or Holiness, and who recommend every man to make his own convenience his standard for his judgment and for his actions. Even the men, who maintain most fervently the truth of the bright existences, at which the others scoff, seem to me never to reason so convincingly or so well, as when they demonstrate (as the ablest of them loves to do*) our ignorance of what is meant by Justice, by Holiness, and by the word 'Knowledge' itself. When they inculcate religious beliefs and practices, they leave their dialectics, and they appeal to the unseen witness in each man's heart as to the truth of the things which they speak about. I believe in what they say. But if

* See the "Euthyphron" and the "Theætetus," and Mr. Grote's work on Plato *passim*, for proofs of the preponderance of the negative element in the reasonings of Socrates.

I am to take my own feelings as sufficient evidences of these great truths on the side of good, why am I not to take my own feelings as sufficient evidences also of the reality of the supernatural powers on the side of evil, whose anger I dread, and under whose visitations I often seem already to be suffering?

"Now, Leon, farewell! I do not forbid you to return; but you must now leave me. May you fare well everywhere, and in all things. You have seen me in my agony. I know that you will not profane such grief by speaking of it to others. I ask this further, Leon, that you will never yourself speak of it to me, or in any way allude to it."

She held out her hand to him. Leon pressed it in silence, and departed.

## CHAPTER VIII.

Through the furnace unshrinking thy steps to pursue,
To shield thee and save thee, or perish there too.
MOORE.

Te spectem, suprema mihi cum venerit hora:
Te teneam moriens deficiente manu.
TIBULLUS.

LEON came again the next evening, and sought no more for Lycisca, but proceeded at once to the terrace, where he again found Atalanta. An inquiry respecting her continued progress towards recovery was the natural pretext for his visit. The objects around them, and the state of the illusory negociations with the enemy furnished abundant topics for lengthened conversa-

tion, without returning or adverting to the painful topics of the last evening's dialogue. Another and another evening brought the same reasons for seeking and for prolonging an interview. Leon cautiously abstained from speaking of himself; and he never assumed a tone of tenderness, or uttered the least personal compliment to Atalanta. But this respectful and guarded manner won him far more influence with her, than he could have gained by employing all those arts of avowed love-making, in which he had once thought himself a proficient. All his high intellectual qualities were called forth by the arduous command which he held; and the other officers owned the ascendancy of his genius, and implicitly submitted to all his directions in the management of the defence of the town. Although he was no boaster, Atalanta could not help perceiving this superiority. He thus won her admiration, and he had already secured her gratitude. Nor did her society fail to exercise a beneficial power over him;

and he found a dignified charm in Atalanta's manners and conversation, that made him a graver, but also a better and a happier man.

Atalanta by degrees perfectly recovered her strength; and at her own urgent request she now began to aid Lycisca in attending on the sick and wounded. A cousin of Leon's had been severely hurt in the assault; and had lately been removed to the house where Atalanta and Lysisca dwelt, in order to have the advantage of the latter's regular attention. Atalanta often watched by him; and remarkable was the contrast which he offered to Leon. Delicate in frame, and nervous in spirit the young Iophon felt and acknowledged the utmost dread of again facing the terrors of a storm, or of enduring the slow sufferings of a blockade.

Atalanta had been sitting by him one afternoon, striving in vain to reassure and console him, and she was about to proceed to the terrace at the accustomed hour, when Lycisca entered with a message from Leon,

imploring her to come instantly to him at a neighbouring house, where his head-quarters were fixed. A large hooded cloak was ready, in which she closely muffled herself, and then, in wonderment but in full confidence, she went at once with Lycisca to the vestibule of Leon's house. The throng of officers and messengers, whom they found there, and the excitement that prevailed among them, showed that some event of importance had occurred. After a short delay, Atalanta was ushered into Leon's apartment, which a Spartan herald quitted as she entered. Leon advanced eagerly to meet her. "Pardon," he said, "my summons, and my present abruptness. The least ripple of time is precious now, and this is my sole opportunity for saving you. The enemy have discovered that we have been duping them; the truce is broken off; they have solemnly resolved to storm the town or to wall us in, and active hostilities will be resumed in the morning. As you know, they last week permitted an envoy from

Athens to be sent for, to take part in the supposed negociations. That envoy arrived last night, and he leaves Platæa to-morrow before dawn. He has a safe-conduct from the enemy for himself and for the four attendants who came with him. That envoy is my firm personal friend. One of his four attendants met with an accidental hurt on the road hither, and has died in the town. The enemy do not know this. Disguised as that attendant, you can quit Platæa in the envoy's train, and your return to Athens is then secure. But you must assume for the occasion the arms and garb of one of our Scythian archers. People will take you for the sick bowman who came with the envoy; and under the pretext of illness you can cloak yourself up, so as to excite no suspicion. Can you, will you do this? Believe me, it is your only chance for life."

Atalanta looked fixedly on him, and said, "I will not leave Platæa."

"Oh, Atalanta!" he exclaimed, wringing

his hands passionately, "do not torture me by baffling my efforts to save you. Can it be that the disfigurement required for this plan of escape makes you refuse it?"

Atalanta smiled. His dagger was lying on a table near. She took it; and advancing to a brazen mirror, she cut away the richest cluster of ringlets from her head. She then laid the severed locks and the dagger before him for answer.

"Oh, what then," he cried, "can be the cause of your refusing to leave this death-devoted city?"

Atalanta looked very earnestly on him: and the eye of the haughty soldier, of the practised man of the world drooped in confusion before that of the truthful and high-minded maiden. At length she said, in a low, distinct tone, "Leon, I love you."

"The gods forbid!" answered he, with vehemence. "You would plant your love on the tomb. Oh, Atalanta, the words you have just spoken make me trebly eager

that you should be saved. Do not give me the bitterness of thinking that love for me must be linked with destruction. Remember, this is the very last chance of escape."

"Is it *quite* certain," said Atalanta, in an altered tone, "that this will be the last chance of being allowed to leave Platæa?"

"It is most certain. There will be no more envoys or safe conducts: and our enemies are exasperated against all within these walls to the last degree of deadly hate.

"Be it so, then," she rejoined—"I will wear the disguise. Where are the Scythian arms and garb?"

"In the next apartment they lie ready for you," answered Leon. I must be on duty all night: but I trust to see you as you pass by here again before you depart. But now I must admit my brother-generals, whom I hear outside."

She stepped swiftly by him, and passed through the inner door which he had

pointed out; and he was speedily engaged in anxious deliberations with the other officers of the garrison. They had reason to believe that an assault, more desperate than the former one, would be made upon the town in the morning, and there was deep need to examine carefully that each brigade and each company was fit for immediate service at the proper post, and also that all the engines and materiel requisite for the defence were ready for use at a moment's notice. While standing in a recess of the window of the apartment, and discussing with a Platæan captain the merits of a proposed scheme for deadening the strokes of the battering-ram, Leon observed through the dusk Atalanta accoutred in her disguise cross the court-yard, and pass forth through the vestibule. He recollected that there was a private staircase leading down from the room where she had been. "'Tis strange," thought he, "that she thus avoids another interview. And yet she is right: she has saved us both from useless suffering.

She is the first woman I ever knew act in such matters on reason instead of impulse." He had little leisure for further reflections, for the gallant mechanic with whom he had been conversing soon roused him from his reverie, and nearly the whole night was occupied either in anxious deliberations, or in personal inspections of the chief posts of defence. He was at daybreak on the most menaced portion of the wall immediately opposite to the mound of the besiegers, and at some distance from the southern gate. But he soon learned with pleasure that the envoy had just proceeded to Lysisca's house, and had been joined there by a young Scythian archer, who seemed ill, and was closely muffled in a cloak; and also that the envoy and his train had passed through the besiegers' lines. "She is safe at last, then," said he to himself; "and now I will meet my fate, be it what it may."

The expectation of a renewed assault was soon realised; but the attack was made in a far more formidable manner than Leon or

any of his comrades had imagined. During the preceding evening and night, the numerous soldiery and still more numerous camp-followers of the enemy, had been bringing in vast heaps of pine and other easily combustible wood from the sides of Mount Cithæron. These they now, in spite of the missiles which the garrison poured upon their working-parties, began to heap into the space between their mound and the nearest part of the town-wall. Their vast numbers toiled unremittingly at the task; and before noon they had piled up a huge mountain of firewood; on and around this they poured large quantities of sulphur and pitch; and then set the whole mass on fire. Instantly a whirlwind of flame volleyed up to the skies, and the fire-billows overlapping the city-wall, threatened to turn Platæa into a burning tomb. Had the least breeze sprung up to waft the flames over the city, all must have perished; and, even in the still atmosphere the solid masonry of the part of the wall which was thus assailed, cracked with

the fervent heat, and the neighbouring buildings began rapidly to take fire. In this imminent peril Leon called on the garrison to rush forward and pull down some of the houses, so as to cut off the further progress of the flames. But so intense was the heat near the quarter where the fire raged, that the bravest of the soldiery hung back; and when Leon strove to encourage them, and ran forward with a hatchet in his hand, he was struck to the ground by one of the falling rafters, and lay helpless under the shower of stones and ashes. His comrades looked on in terror: but at length one was seen rushing through the ranks to the fallen general, and striving to protect him by holding a buckler over his head. Leon rallied a little from the stunning effect of the blow, but was too weak to rise. A cruise of water was held to his lips. He looked up; and saw beneath the helmet and waving plumes of the seeming soldier, who leaned over him, the fair features and the deep blue eyes of Atalanta. She saw his glance of recogni-

tion, and she smiled with happiness, while she bathed his temples with the last drops from the cruise, to aid him to endure the suffocating heat around them.

"Forgive me," she whispered, "for deceiving you. It was your cousin that availed himself of the disguise which you had prepared for me, and that escaped this morning with the envoy. I could not leave you. When I heard the fury of the assault, I put on Iophon's armour, and came forth to watch over you. We must die together."

Leon pressed her hand in silence. The death, of which she spake, seemed close at hand; for the fiery atmosphere became insufferable. Atalanta sank fainting beneath it; her last feeling of fading consciousness being the delight of expiring on Leon's bosom.

But Platæa was not thus to perish. Dark clouds had gathered rapidly over the face of heaven, and a deluge of rain burst over the imperilled city. The saving torrents gushed and gurgled down, cooling the parched air

and quenching the hissing flames; while the garrison, encouraged by what seemed an interposition of their tutelary gods, rushed forward to man the walls again, and to repel the anticipated attack of the enemy's stormers on the weakened parts of the defences near the mound. But the besiegers were awe-struck at what they also believed to be the intervention of superhuman powers to protect Platæa. One column only advanced against an opening in the defences, where the timbers of one of the principal gates had been nearly destroyed by the flames. Timarchus and Diphilus led this corps; and they dashed boldly into the town. It was near the spot where the besiegers thus entered, that Leon and Atalanta had fallen; and Timarchus encountered Crantor, and that part of the garrison, which was busied in carrying off their general. The assailants recoiled; and finding themselves unsupported by their comrades retreated towards the opening, by which they gained their entrance. As they retired, Diphilus recognised Atalanta, whom

the Athenians in their eagerness to save Leon had left on the ground. He removed the helmet from her head, and pointed her features out to Timarchus, who also recognised her with savage joy, and bade his men bear her back with them outside the walls. They regained their lines with little loss; and when Atalanta awoke to consciousness, she was a prisoner in the Peloponnesian camp, while Leon was cooped up helpless and hopeless in the devoted city, which the besiegers now resolved to reduce by the slow but certain processes of blockade and starvation.

## CHAPTER IX.

"They all had a consultation as to what they would consider best to be done, in case the enemy were to get in; and whether it would be right to put an end to ourselves, if they did so, to save ourselves from the horrors we should have to endure. Some of the ladies keep laudanum and prussic acid always near them. I can scarcely think it right to have recourse to such means; it appears to me all that we have to do is to endeavour, so far as we can, to be prepared for our death, and leave the rest in the hands of Him who knows what is best for us."

*Day by day at Lucknow.*. MRS. CASE.

WHEN his column was beaten back out of Platæa, Timarchus rallied his men outside of the town, and drew them up in restored order, as soon as they were at a sufficient distance from the wall to be secure from the missiles of the besieged. He ascertained, with anger that several of his best soldiers had fallen, and had been left behind, either dead or captured, in Platæa. Dismissing his

troops to their tents, except a detachment that was to mount guard at the inner trench, Timarchus went hastily to where King Archidamus had halted the Lacedæmonian phalanx immediately on the burst of the rain storm, which the Spartan looked on as an omen from heaven against the attack. Timarchus was beginning to complain bitterly and vehemently of the folly or cowardice, which had left him and his column unsupported in the assault; but the old King ordered him to desist from using such language in the hearing of the soldiery, and desired him to attend presently at a council of war at head-quarters.

Timarchus retired; and had walked a little way back in moody displeasure, when Diphilus rejoined him, after having seen Atalanta carried to the Corinthian commander's tent.

"Now," said the Megarian,—"now, Timarchus, I have literally kept my part of the contract. I have carried off Atalanta, and placed her fully in your power. Surely

I may now ask you to keep your part of the bargain, and to pay me without further delay."

Timarchus turned sharply on him, and said, with a savage sneer, "It would not be honest towards the Peloponnesian and aristocratic interests, if I were to place money in the hands of a man, who has been decreed to be an enemy to the cause of the Few, and a traitorous tool of Athens. If you wait in the camp till to-morrow, you will hear some news from Megara, that will a little enlighten you." The wily Corinthian chief forgot his usual cunning when he said this. No sooner had the words been uttered, than he reflected that it would have been better to keep silence about the mock trial and real sentence of Diphilus at Megara, until the official news reached the camp, when the condemned man would be sure to be summarily seized and executed by orders from head-quarters. But he had the malignant satisfaction of beholding the consternation of Diphilus at his answer; and, as he walked away, he thought

to himself, "It matters little whether he tries to escape or not. At any rate, he will never trouble me more; and as to Atalanta, long as she has baffled me, I am at last sure of satiating love and vengeance in that quarter."

While Timarchus proceeded towards the Spartan King's tent, Diphilus walked slowly back to the Corinthian lines. He understood too well the meaning of the words, which he had heard. He knew thoroughly the unscrupulous character of his Corinthian employer, and the influence exercised by him in the Oligarchical Council of Twelve, which disposed of men's rights and lives at Megara, often without trial, or even notice to their victims that they were under suspicion. Yet he had trusted to his own well-known zeal against the Athenians, and to the ready courage, which he had shown in several battles, and in more than one daring enterprise against the national foes of Megara's independence. As he was pondering whether he had better take to flight, or remain to face whatever might await him,

he observed a camp-follower watching him from a little distance, and seeming, by signals, to ask permission to address him. The man wore a barbaric dress, and appeared to be a stranger to the Greek language. Diphilus had seen the same man hovering near the camp in the early morning; and the stranger, whoever he might be, had then come up close to him, as if to convey some letter or other missive to him. Busy with the preparations for the assault, Diphilus had then roughly driven the stranger away; but he now thought that there might be some serious motive for the man's persevering efforts to approach him. Diphilus accordingly turned and met him. The man placed his finger on his lips, and then pronounced, with a disguised voice, the words, "Nausicaa, Eugeanax." The first was the name of a favourite galley, which Diphilus had once commanded, and on board of which he had obtained great distinction. The other was the name of a man high in favour with some of the Council of Twelve, whose life he

had once saved on board that very galley, when an enemy's crew was making a desperate attempt to carry her by boarding. As the messenger uttered these words, he placed in the hands of Diphilus a small scroll, on which were written only the words "Condemned one, fly!—shun Corinth." While Diphilus was reading the scroll, the messenger ran rapidly away. Diphilus now thoroughly comprehended all that had taken place. His thoughts for his own safety were almost overmastered by his longing for revenge upon Timarchus, whom he rightly judged to be the originator of the plot, which had made him a condemned outlaw, and which would certainly involve the sacrifice of his life in a few hours more, if he lingered in the Peloponnesian camp. He remembered Atalanta in the tent. "She," thought he, "shall be the instrument of my vengeance, as well as of her own. Then must come a refugee's life, or whatever else fate may have in store for me." He made his way to Timarchus's tent, where he was

well known by the attendants, and readily admitted. Bidding them all leave the pavilion, until their master should return and summon them, he entered the inner apartment, where, bound and helpless, lay Atalanta.

During the dreadful period, which had ensued since she had recovered consciousness, and found herself cut off from all she loved, and given over to her loathed enemy, Atalanta had striven, not in vain, to collect all the energies of her soul, and to determine on her line of action with clear will and unfaltering resolution. It often happens —at least it often happens with minds of high order—that the very crisis of distress and danger brings inspiration. Difficulties, which, while yet looming in the distance and uncertain of realisation, seem to overwhelm the judgment, cease to be difficulties, when brought into present actuality and urgency. We instantly choose and keep our path without hesitation or unsteadiness over what appeared to us, when contemplated from afar,

to be a labyrinthine and engulphing wilderness. Atalanta had often pondered with ever-increasing perplexity and doubt over the dread question, whether suicide can ever be morally permissible. She had often heard the subject argued by the Sophistæ, and by the men eminent in action as well as in debate, who frequented the society of Aspasia. The theory which appeared to her the noblest, and which commanded most assent, if not most conviction, was that, which Socrates (who in his early life often attended the discussions at Aspasia's house) long afterwards taught his weeping friends in his prison before he drank the hemlock, and which the most illustrious of those friends has recorded in the dialogue entitled 'The Phædon.' According to that doctrine, man placed in life is like a soldier placed at his post, and he cannot quit it without guilt and disgrace, until a superior power removes him. The most eloquent expounders of that doctrine insisted also that every human being, while on earth, is under the superin-

tendence and in the service of a Divine Master, who is the best and wisest of masters, and that man cannot withdraw himself from that master's service without showing a criminal distrust of His goodness and His power. The solemn truths taught in the 'Mysteries' were referred to as proving the sinfulness of suicide at all times, and without any exception: and a discourse of a lately-renowned Pythagorean philosopher, Philolaus, to the same effect, was often quoted. Yet others, who took part in these debates, and who were entitled to be heard with respect on account of personal character as well as of intellect, were accustomed to maintain that, though the general duty of man was to live out his life as he found it, there might be and there were exceptional cases, in which calamity was so overwhelming, and suffering and contumely were so oppressive, that a man might rightfully withdraw himself from them.*

* Plato, in his 'Dialogue on Laws' (Book IX., 873), excepts from his denunciation of suicide cases where a

Atalanta had once heard Diotima appealed to by the disputants on this subject. Diotima was regarded by many (including Atalanta) with religious awe as an inspired prophetess, and by all with interest, on account of her learning, her travels, her familiar acquaintance with celebrated sages and mystics of distant lands, and the eloquence with which her theories were sometimes poured forth, eloquence of which an imperishable record survives to us in the pages of Plato. Diotima sternly censured all discussions on the subject of suicide as unprofitable and mischievous. "Such talk," she said, "creates in you a morbid fondness for prying into mysteries, as to which not one mortal in ten thousand ever has any practical need of

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man is compelled to it by very agonising misfortune befalling him, which he cannot otherwise escape, or by his receiving some shame that admits of no remedy, and under which life becomes insupportable. He directs an ignominious burial for the body of him who slays himself if—*μήτε περιωδύνῳ ἀφύκτῳ προσπεσούσῃ τύχῃ ἀναγκασθεὶς, μηδὲ αἰσχύνης τινὸς ἀπόρου καὶ ἀβίου μεταλαχών, ἀργίᾳ δὲ καὶ ἀνανδρίας δειλίᾳ ἑαυτῷ δίκην ἄδικον ἐπιθῇ.*

knowledge, and as to which the gods, if you have deserved their favour, will send you knowledge in your hour of need, should that hour of need ever arrive. Yet, as you have been quoting Philolaus, I will tell you that Philolaus taught the truth; but you, who quote him, do not comprehend the whole truth which he taught. I myself was one of the instructors of Philolaus at Crotona, long years ago. The Samian sage, from whom the lore of us all has been drawn, warns the wise that man's soul is the property of the gods; that the gods have placed the soul, on account of its ante-natal sins, in the prison-house of this vile body, and that man cannot break from his prison without offence against the laws of the gods. Nevertheless, we are not to be rash in blaming those, who have led lives of justice, and purity, and courage, and who have ended those lives by what appear to have been acts of self-removal. Such men may in the hour of extreme distress have received from the compassionating gods an inner

revelation of heavenly permission to withdraw. So you would have understood Philolaus, if you had listened to him rightly, or if you had read aright the books which he has been the first of Pythagoreans to put forth. Your own dramatist, Euripides, has half stated and half perverted our doctrine on this matter. In the mystic tragedy lately exhibited (which bears the same name as Philolaus' last treatise), Euripides makes Dionysus, when brought as a supposed mortal in chains before Pentheus, defy the tyrant's threats of close imprisonment by saying—

"The God will free me at my own free will." *

The liberation which your dramatist means, is the liberation of self-inflicted death. †

* Δύσει μ' ὁ Δαίμων αὐτὸς, ὅταν ἐγὼ θελω.

EURIPIDES, *Bacchæ*, 488.

It is recorded of Philolaus, the Pythagorean Philosopher, that he wrote a book entitled the 'Bacchæ.'

† This is the interpretation given by Horace to the line in Euripides already cited. At the end of his epistle to his friend Quinctius, he thus translates and comments on part of the scene in Euripides:—

But, with his usual innovating spirit, Euripides has made man's right to this liberation co-extensive with man's caprice. Beware of such an error. Beware also of disparaging the goodness or the power of the gods, who have placed us here, by doubting that they will at the fitting time and in fitting manner grant permission to those, who need and who deserve it, to retire from polluting and debasing evil. You, Atalanta, and those like you, may do well to prepare yourselves to use that permission, if required, and if it be spoken to you by a voice within the heart. Let others abstain from such speculations."

Half-persuaded—but only half-persuaded—by Diotima's words, Atalanta had from that time forth borne about her the means of

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Vir bonus et sapiens audebit dicere "Pentheu,
Rector Thebarum, quid me perferre patique
Indignum coges?" Adimam bona. "Nempe pecus, rem,
Lectos, argentum? tollas licet." In manicis, et
Compedibus sævo te sub custode tenebo.
"Ipse Deus simul atque volam me solvet." Opinor
Hoc sentit "Moriar." Mors ultima linea rerum est.
Ep. lib. 1, Ep. xvi.

self-release in the event of her falling into the power of her constant persecutor Timarchus, or in the event of the siege and capture of Athens giving a slave-master dominion over her body. She had a small quill filled with a deadly and rapid poison, which her mother had taught her how to prepare while they were at Sinope. This was concealed in an inner fold of the vest; and she had been careful to ensure its safety and readiness, when she put on Iophon's armour, and went forth to stand by Leon's side in the street of Platæa. Her Corinthian captors, when they bound her and left her in their general's tent, had not tied her hands down so closely, but that she retained the power of bringing her right hand forward so as to clutch the poison-quill, and be able to convey it to her lips. She did not feel the least particle of fear or of doubt. "Death rather than pollution," were the sole words, that she murmured to herself, as she ascertained that the means of deliverance were within her reach. Some natural love of life, and

still more the thought of Leon made her determine not to use the poison until the very last available moment. Phantasy, that is so active in such cases, when the mind is fearfully overstrung, suggested that the besieged might perhaps sally and rescue her, or that there might be another assault given by the besiegers, in which her arch-enemy might fall. When she brought these fancies to the test of her judgment, she knew how vain all such hopes were, and she smiled at herself for indulging in them; yet she again indulged in them, and she resolved to live on to the last extremity, but with unfaltering purpose to die as soon as that extremity arrived. All was noiseless in the camp around her. The stillness, and the delay of what appeared to be her inevitable doom, grew dreadful. She moved her lips, and some words of Sophocles came unbidden to them. They were a line from the soliloquy of Ajax in the tragedy of that name, immediately before the hero falls on his own sword. It is a line that has many,

many times been uttered by miserable watchers for certain but lingering dissolution of body and soul.

Come hither, Death; look on me now, oh Death.
Ὦ Θάνατε, Θάνατε, νῦν μ' ἐπίσκεψαι μόλων.

As Atalanta pronounced these words, the folds of the tent were lifted, and an armed man entered. She saw by the figure that it was not Timarchus, but the light was too dim for her to discern the features of the new visitant, who halted at a few paces from her, and drew a dagger from its sheath. The thought occurred to her that an executioner might have been sent to inflict on her at once the doom, which commonly befell all prisoners of war, who came into the power of the Lacedæmonians. Rejoiced at the idea, she raised herself as much as her bonds would allow, and stretched out her bare throat to receive the steel. The man struck not, and moved not but he said, in a low eager voice, "Atalanta, be silent; listen to me, and do as I bid. You may yet save yourself. To hear my name may give you little

confidence in me: but you must know all. I am Diphilus, the Megarian, captain of the crew that bore you away from Attica. The promised bribes of Timarchus then made me your enemy. His perfidy to me now makes me your confederate. He is about to murder me by form of law; you know well for what purpose you yourself have been brought here. We may kill him, and we may then escape. To attempt an escape without his first being killed would be utterly useless. Take this dagger. He has gone to council, but will soon be here. When he approaches you, and his arms are round you, stab, and stab home. An upward stab under the ribs is best. There must be no noise or struggling —but I shall be near, and will help you if necessary. I know where to find for you a new disguise and fit equipment for our flight. All his slaves are now ordered to remain at some distance from the tent, and we are sure of some hours' start before the pursuit begins. I know all the by-paths over Cithæron. When we reach Œnoë or Eleutheræ we are safe."

The Megarian cut the cords with which Atalanta's hands and feet were secured, cautioning her at the same time to lie still, as if she were still bound. He then thrust the hilt of the dagger into her right hand; and with a final warning to her to conceal it well, and to use it well, he disappeared behind a corner of the inner tent. In her surprise at the prospect of deliverance thus suddenly opened, Atalanta had not replied to him; but when she was again left alone, the recollection soon occurred that the man, whose blood she was now required to shed, was the man who had saved her father's life, and to whose service her father's prayers and adjurations had devoted her. "I will not slay him," she said to herself; "it is better for me to die." She laid the dagger on the ground, determined to trust to the poison-quill alone. In a few minutes the enemy was at hand. The intended council of war had been adjourned; and Timarchus, on his return to his tent, had only paused to take a deep draught of wine at the quarters of his

friend the Theban Bœotarch. With his savage feelings still further inflamed by the drink, he entered the inner apartment of the tent. He took off his armour in silence, and then at once strode across to where Atalanta was lying motionless and seemingly helpless. He looked her over with a long gloating gaze, and then leaning down close to her, exclaimed, "What, caught at last, my coy huntress? What shall now save you from the toils? Will your Ephesian Diana aid you? Aphroditè is the power that rules now; though you look more like Pallas Athenè in that armour. I must rid you of these incumbrances." As he spoke, he brutally thrust his hand in her bosom within the cuirass. It was there that the poison-quill was secreted. Deprived of this resource at time of deepest need, Atalanta saw where the Megarian's dagger lay on the ground within her reach. In another moment she had seized it, and plunged it deeply into her assailant's side. Timarchus gave one deep groan, fell heavily, rolled over with a single

convulsive struggle, and the body then lay bleeding and motionless. Atalanta sprang wildly to her feet. Diphilus came forward from his place of concealment, and closely scrutinised the body and the wound. "You have done it well," he said; "no second stroke is wanted here. Now for flight and safety." She replied not to him: and he saw that she was standing fixed as in a trance, still holding the blood-stained dagger. Her lips were parted, but motionless. Her nostrils were dilated, and her eyes were set in rigid stare, as if some vision of angry dæmons was passing before her. "Atalanta," said the Megarian, "think of your life—think of the lives of others—think of Leon." At the mention of Leon's name, Atalanta seemed to regain consciousness and self-command. She dropped the dagger, and with a deep sigh turned and looked towards Diphilus. "Atalanta," he continued, "Leon is still in Platæa. Will you not run some risk to save him?" She replied by an eager gesture of readiness. He proceeded: "You

must not go forth hence with that Athenian armour on, or with those blood-stains on your robes. In the chest, on the opposite side of the tent, you will find the dress and armour of an Arcadian targeteer. Timarchus kept all kinds of disguises ready. This one will suit you best, and will be most convenient for our journey. Make haste, and put it on; meanwhile I will go and ascertain that the course is still clear around us." He passed to the outer tent; and Atalanta hastily did as he bade her, putting off the arms and garb in which she had been captured, and arraying herself as a light-armed mountaineer from Arcadia, of whom there were many among the irregular troops that followed the Peloponnesian army. It was a costume well fitted for purposes of flight and disguise. Instead of a helmet, there was a low-crowned felt hat or bonnet, slightly strengthened with thin iron bars. The brim came far down over the face and neck, so as to give the wearer considerable protection from sun and rain—and also so as

to hide materially the features and complexion of the face, and the poise and bearing of the head and shoulders. The bonnet was secured by a very broad band under the chin, which would save it from being torn off by boughs or brambles when the wearer was following his hounds in the Arcadian highlands, and which also would make it additionally difficult for any one to recognise or identify his face. The Chlamys,—of which our modern traveller's shepherd's plaid is the counterpart in shape and fabric and use,—was of dark-grey woollen; as was the close-fitting under-garment, which reached from throat to knee, and which was tightened round the waist by a leathern belt, in which a short sword or hunting-knife, and a scrip were carried. The buskins were of strong leather, and were worn as large and high as was practicable without their materially hampering the wearer's speed and activity. There was a small light wicker target, which was usually slung behind the back, until required for combat with either wild-beasts or human

enemies. A strong javelin, which could be used in close fight as a boar-spear or a pike, completed the light-armed Arcadian's equipment. Taking care to keep her head averted from the spot where the body was lying, Atalanta speedily arrayed herself; and eagerly washed away the blood-spots from her hands and arms with water, which she found in a ewer near the chest. She took care to preserve and carry her poison-quill in her inner dress; and then, with target slung and javelin in hand, she passed out into the exterior tent, where Diphilus awaited her. He gave her a smile of approbation, as he surveyed her disguise, and said: "All is quiet outside near the tent, and will, I think, be so for some little time to come. Your good dagger-stroke has made sure that all is quiet within. I, too, must turn Arcadian for a time. This full armour that I am now wearing, may be very dignified, but it is very inconvenient for a run through the mountains. There is another dress of the same kind as yours within. I will go and

put it on. Meanwhile, wait quietly here, and do not let yourself be seen from without." He left her, and entered the inner tent. Atalanta waited in silent eagerness. Her whole heart was filled with the thought of re-entering Platæa and rejoining Leon. The Megarian soon reappeared in Arcadian garb and armour. He had also taken the signet-ring from the hand of Timarchus; and he had appropriated an ample supply of money from the Corinthian's stores. "Now," he exclaimed to Atalanta, "we are twin-Arcadians; and we must use the hunters' craft as well as daring in working our way through these dens of wolves."

"I am ready:" said Atalanta. "I suppose we had better walk at first slowly and saunteringly towards the town, and trust to our speed, or to our weapons, or to both, if we are discovered or impeded. I will not be taken alive. Which gate of the town are we to make for?"

"Which gate of the town?" re-echoed

Diphilus. "Why none at all. We are not to try to enter Platæa."

"Not enter Platæa? It was solely for that purpose that I have prolonged my own life, and taken the life of another."

"It would be utterly useless to make the attempt. Look, and judge for yourself. Through this crevice of the tent you may see how the besiegers' lines of sentries round the town have been doubled and trebled since this morning's repulse. Gyges himself could not pass through them unchallenged. At nightfall a new trench will be made almost within bow-shot of the wall, which will be strongly manned and guarded night and day. And even if we could enter Platæa, what good to any human being should we do there? We should only add two more to the number of consumers of stores already very scanty. Listen to me. I know the plans of the besiegers well. After this morning's defeat they will give no more assaults. They will build walls round the town, and starve all the people

in it to death. There will be no more fighting. The supplies in Platæa will last the garrison for about half a year; and for that time Leon's life is much safer than yours or mine. At the end of that time, he must die of famine, or must surrender at discretion to have his throat cut, unless the siege is in some way broken up. We must go to Athens, and try what can be done there to break it up. I have heard that you possess or can command money. There is one leader at least among the orators at Athens, with whom money will do anything. You want to save Leon? I point out to you a way—and the only possible way—by which he may be saved. Doubtless, it would give you a sentimental pleasure to enter the town, to share the last months of your lover's life, and to die together with him. But such pleasure would be absolutely cowardly and selfish. Instead of trying to die with Leon, try to live for him, and to save him. Wealth, courage, and cleverness

may do it. I believe you have all three. Do you grudge him the use of them?"

Atalanta paused for a little time before she made reply. She looked earnestly on the city walls, which held all that she prized or loved on earth;—so near to her, and yet so far. A burst of tears came to her relief. When this brief paroxysm of womanly grief had passed, she turned to the Megarian and said, in a low composed tone: "I feel that there is truth and justice in your words. Let us to Athens. I will follow your directions implicitly. I have trust in you and in myself. I will not outlive a third captivity. Do not fear any more such outbreaks of weak tears, as you have just witnessed. Only abstain from mentioning his name again in my hearing. I could not in such case quite answer for my self-control. What is now to be our course?"

"The slaves and attendants have all had orders to go two bow-shots distance from the tent, and not to return or come near till called for. I have made a careful recon-

naissance, and I find that none of them are at the back. They have all gone forward towards the trenches, and are watching the archery-match at long range, which is going on between our bowmen and the bowmen on the wall. Indeed, there is hardly any one about in the rear of any of the tents in this part of the camp. We must pass quickly out of this side-door, and then walk speedily but not hurriedly along the back of the camp, till we come opposite to the first path up Mount Cithæron. Our story must be that we are going to hunt there at early dawn, and that we start thus early in order to get a good hiding-place for the night well up the mountain, in the high grounds, to which the large game have been driven by yesterday's wood-cutters. That pretext will serve with most of those, whom we are likely to meet. Those who may recognise me, will know also Timarchus's practice of sending out spies in all kinds of disguises. Moreover, I have his signet-ring, which will be a sure pass, in case of any difficulty being made by

sentinels. Recollect, you now are Athanas, son of Menon; and your home is Cynæthæ, in Western Arcadia. Can you speak the Arcadian pâtois? I fear lest your Attic accent may betray you."

"I cannot speak Arcadian, but I can speak the Doric dialect. My father's native-city is Halicarnassus."

"That will do well. Many Arcadians, when they serve with the Lacedæmonian troops, take a pride in imitating the accent and phrases of their leaders. Speak Doric, and the worse you speak it the better. Those dog-boy, acorn-eating savages generally make a horrible jargon when they try to use the tongue of the Heraclidæ. But it will be best of all if you speak as little as possible, when any one besides me is within hearing. Now the coast is clear. Step briskly out of the tent; then turn to the left. Do not look back, but go steadily along till I come up with you."

Atalanta obeyed; and in another second stood in the open air, free in limb, and

armed for either self-defence or self-destruction. The feeling of independence gave vigour and boldness to her gait and gesture, as she walked forwards in the direction indicated by the Megarian. In a few minutes he was at her side. "That pace and action will do well," he said, as he eyed her. "No one would suspect you of being a runaway. But do me the favour of altering the set of your plaid a little. It is gracefully folded and tied; but it will do better just now, if you will cross it over the breast, and tie up the ends in a knot at your back as awkwardly as possible. Now, then, hitch your target up a little way on your shoulders, and then let its lower edge rest on the knot of the plaid."

Atalanta did as he ordered.

"Excellent," he said. "Your figure is now delightfully unattractive, and your shadow looks clumsy enough for the shade of Timarchus himself."

Atalanta said to him—"I pray you do not make a jest—I pray you not to speak

at all, unless necessary, of him—whose toils are over." *

"I will not, since you desire me not to do so. But I tell you frankly, that I hate him even now he is dead with an undying hatred. I hate him, as I hate those cowardly hireling traitors of my own city, who for his bribes sold me, as they thought, to infamy and destruction. I now believe that there is truth in the saying, that no oligarchy ever had generosity, gratitude, or honour. But I will make them deeply rue the hour, when they voted their lying decree against Diphilus. What they have called me in their falsehood I will be in grim reality—a friend to Athens, and a foe to them. I know every inch of our coasts and harbours; and I can give your generals some hints about Minoa, which, if followed out, will soon bring the Aristocrats in Megara to their knees, and will replace me

* The beautifully poetic phrase Οἱ Κεκμηώτες, "They who *have* laboured," was habitually used by the Greeks when speaking of the dead.

in my native city; not to be what I have hitherto been—the useful fighting-man of thankless masters, but as the leader amid a victorious democracy. Then I will drink still deeper of revenge, than your brave right hand has given me to drink of that delicious draught to-day. I may have need of some of your gold to bribe Cleon and Hyperbolus in this matter. See, it is my interest to bring you safely to Athens. Perhaps that may serve you for security why you should trust me: and I cannot expect your trust to be given easily after the great wrong which I once did to you. Were I to tell you now, that, putting all considerations of interest aside, you may trust a bold sea-rover, that likes and admires a brave girl who will risk her life for her lover, and who will stab her enemy if there be need,—you would hardly believe me; and yet I should tell you no more than the truth. I am not so hard, or so selfish, as I may appear."

## CHAPTER X.

"Ibant obscuri solâ sub nocte per umbram."
VERG. *Æn.* lib. VI. 268.

"Oft had he shown in climes afar
Each attribute of roving war:
The sharpened ear, the piercing eye,
The quick resolve in danger nigh,
The sturdy brain, the sinewy limb
To leap, to climb, to dive, to swim.
'Twas then in hour of utmost need
He proved his courage, art and speed—
And well he might the bearing trace
Of the bold youth who led the chace."
SCOTT'S *Rokeby*, c. 3.

"Then changen 'gan the colour in their face.
Like as the hunter in the realm of Thrace,
That standeth at a gappé with a spear,
When hunted is the lion or the bear;
And heareth him come rushing in the greaves,
And breaking both the boughés and the leaves,
And thinks 'Here comes my mortal enemy,
'Withouten fail he must be dead or I.'"
CHAUCER. *The Knight's Tale.*

IT was late in the afternoon, when the

fugitives came out of Timarchus's tent, and, as they had to traverse a considerable part of the lines at a leisurely pace, the sun was about to go down, before they struck off for the mountain path. The precautions of Diphilus respecting their disguises, and the absence of all signs of hurry or alarm in the way in which they walked along the camp, and the pretext of pursuit of game in the higher glens of Cithæron, had prevented all suspicion among the idlers who met and spoke to them. The production of the signet-ring of Timarchus satisfied the only officer on duty, who thought it necessary to question them formally. Directly that they entered the mountain-road, they hurried forward as rapidly as possible. The Megarian knew the path well, and there was moonlight sufficient to show it clearly during the first hours of the night; but the moon went down early, which was in favour of him and Atalanta as against pursuit.

Diphilus calculated that the death of

Timarchus would not be known in the camp for some time, and that any parties of troops, that might then be sent after Atalanta and himself, would have no moonlight at all over any part of the mountain-road. His anticipations were correct. At least two hours passed away before any of the attendants of Timarchus dared to return to the tent without orders; and, when they had discovered the body, and raised an alarm, some more time elapsed, before it was observed that Diphilus, and the Athenian prisoner, who had been carried out of the town, had disappeared. When this was ascertained, and when the commanders in the camp had also found that Diphilus had obtained the signet-ring of the Corinthian leader, and had passed through the camp up towards Mount Cithæron in disguise, with a person in his company similarly disguised, the other Corinthian officers ordered pursuing parties to be instantly sent up the various mountain-paths, with directions to bring in the fugitives dead

or alive. But these orders were not executed with much general zeal. No human being loved Timarchus, though many had stood in awe of him.

As long as either daylight or moonlight lasted, Diphilus urged Atalanta to make the greatest possible exertions in walking or running along their mountain road, as the nature of the ground allowed. Gifted with remarkable strength and activity, and animated by almost indomitable spirit, she had fairly kept up to the best pace at which he could lead, and had more than once excited his expressions of admiration. When the moon went completely down, Diphilus said:

"Now we may rest for a short time in safety, and we may then do the remaining part of our journey under easy sail. Look through the opening at this corner. You see those lights gleaming about down yonder, far below us? Well, you see the torches of our pursuers. They are only just entering

the mountain-path. They will have to blunder and stumble up the whole ascent, which we have just traversed so rapidly. We will now take our supper leisurely. Even if they should gain ground on us afterwards, their torches will show them to us as they come up, and we can easily hide in the thickets at the side; or, if they straggle up two or three at a time, our boar-spears and knives can give a good account of them. I would fearlessly meet a worse peril with the aid of a comrade so firm, both of limb and of spirit, as you have proved yourself to be."

As he spoke, he seated himself on the root of an old tree, and spread his plaid for Atalanta at his side. A clear stream bubbled close by. The Megarian had filled his scrip with bread, which he had bought before they left the camp; and the refreshment was welcome to Atalanta, who had not tasted food since she had armed in Platæa before noon. When they had finished

their meal, Diphilus proposed that they should resume their march, unless Atalanta felt too weary.

"I am ready," said she "to go onward; but is there not risk of our missing the path now that the moonlight has failed us?"

"Not at all," replied Diphilus, "I know all these passes well; and the stars shine brightly enough to aid an old sailor in his steerage. Recollect I am an old privateersman—an old pirate, some might call me; and men, who have lived such lives as mine, have cat's eyes in the dark. But there is no need for haste. I do not want to be at Œnoë much before sunrise."

They moved slowly but steadily onwards, Atalanta following the Megarian, who seemed to trace his path instinctively through the midnight gloom of the forest. There was bright starlight in the sky, but in most parts the path was overhung by large boughs, or arched in by the inter-

lacing tops of the underwood. By degrees, Atalanta's eyes became accustomed to the dimness around; and the fitful sparkles of starlight enabled her to discern objects at her side and before her. But all appeared vague and unsteady in outline and in position. She seemed to be moving in a land of dreams. A reaction was ensuing on the overwrought state of excitement, by which she had nerved herself to go through the perils and fatigues of the early part of their flight. Thoughts of Timarchus and of her father's curse now crowded on her unwilling memory. Ghastly images floated thickly on her inner sense; and soon even the outward eye seemed to find horrible objects of supernatural wrath oppressing it. She drew back her foot from the fallen masses of tree and rock, lest she should tread on the carcase of him whom she had slain. The body seemed at every turn of the path to lie writhing in its death-agony before her. The roots, which projected from the steep bank at her side, appeared to her to be snakes of the Furies

which stretched out to seize and to torture.* At last she stumbled, and fell heavily to the ground in an almost fainting state. Diphilus turned back at the noise, and raised and supported her. He thought that her weakness came from mere fatigue.

"Courage," he said. "Bear up a little longer. Though, indeed, such a night-march as this may well have been too much for you. Look, yonder are the Three Oak-heads; and when we reach them, we shall be within an hour's walk of Œnoë."

Und die Wurzeln, wie die Schlangen,
Winden sich aus Fels und Sande,
Strecken wunderliche Bande,
Uns zu shrecken uns zu fangen.
Aus belebten derben Masern
Strecken sie Polypenfasern
Nach dem Wandr'r.

GÖTHE. *Faust.*

Every root is like a snake;
And along the loose hill-side
With strange contortions through the night
Curls to seize or to affright.
And animated, strong, and many
They dart forth Polypus-antennæ
To blister with their poison-spume
The Wanderer.

SHELLEY'S *Translation.*

He helped her along till they came to the Oak-heads. The ground was now more open; and the slight night-breeze, which had been almost imperceptible along the path through the close thickets, blew more freely here, and revived Atalanta considerably. She recognised the spot well as the scene of her first conversation with Leon, after he had rescued her from her present guide.

The recollection of Leon, as usual, gave her fresh energy; and she walked a little distance farther, though slowly and painfully. Heavy sleepiness, which she strove in vain to shake off, increased on her. Diphilus locked her arm in his, and aided her along without her knowing it. At last he halted, and let her sink down upon a shelving bank.

"Poor girl!" he said; "she is evidently out-worn; but she is a true soldier to be able to sleep while on the march. I will let her rest here for a little time. The pursuit appears to have ceased. I have seen nothing

of their torches for some time past." As he spoke, he drew her plaid over her, so as to give her some protection from the night-air. He then made a pillow for her of his own plaid, tending her with more gentleness and care, than could have been expected from one so rugged in appearance and general demeanour. He watched unremittingly by her side, while she slept deeply for nearly an hour. When she awoke, the morning star was in the east. Diphilus pointed to it, and said:

"I am glad that you are awake. We ought ere this to have been under the walls of Œnoë."

As he spoke, an arrow whistled over his head; and another pierced the skirt of Atalanta's dress, and lodged in the bank, from which she was in the act of rising.

"Back behind the trees for your life!" he exclaimed, and dragged Atalanta with him to their shelter. He then looked forth, and his quick eye at once discovered the number and position of their enemies. The road at

the place where they were attacked, was scarped out in zig-zags along the steep mountain-side. Here and there the banks were bare of underwood; and a person in a lower line of the road could at intervals see clearly, and could reach easily with a missile weapon another person, who was on an upper and nearly parallel branch of the road. In the lower road, immediately beneath them, Diphilus saw two Locrian archers and an Arcadian targeteer. These were three of the most advanced pursuing party; and these three alone had kept up the chase after the torches had burnt out. They had come opposite to Atalanta's resting-place, just as she and Diphilus were moving from it. The two Locrians had immediately used their bows, in the hope of killing or crippling the fugitives; and they saw that an arrow had apparently struck one of their intended victims, who seemed then unable to move without the other's help. The Locrians thought that one prize at least was secure. They paused to point this out to the

Arcadian who had been a little in the rear, and had not seen the effect of the arrows. They quickly formed their plan of attack. With the Arcadian leading them, the Locrians ran towards the corner of the zig-zag, in order to come round and get closer to their prey. Diphilus was still quicker in his tactics. Bidding Atalanta keep close to him, he moved rapidly down along the upper road for a few yards, to where a little torrent made its way straight down the hill-side into the lower road. The open space which it traversed was about three yards broad. Those who passed by its opening in the lower road, came fully within the reach of a javelin thrown down from the opening in the upper road. "Poise your javelin!" said Diphilus to Atalanta. "I will settle the Arcadian—do you take a steady aim at one of the archers." As he spoke, the footsteps of their pursuers sounded below them. Making due allowance for the pace, at which his mark was crossing the line of sight, Diphilus hurled his javelin down, and struck

his man near the collar-bone. The two Locrians ran by unharmed. Diphilus turned in surprise and anger to Atalanta, who stood still with the javelin in her hand. "I can shed no more blood," she murmured. "Too much already." Diphilus snatched the javelin from her, and bidding her at least draw her sword and defend herself, he advanced towards the corner of the road to meet the surviving pursuers. The Locrians had seen their Arcadian comrade fall; but they thought that they had only a single enemy to deal with, and that he had spent his javelin. Fitting fresh arrows on their bowstrings, and with their bows half-bent, they moved cautiously round the corner of the zig-zag. Diphilus ran rapidly at them. They took steady aim, and discharged their arrows within short range; but no mark is so difficult to hit, as a living object, that is coming swiftly in a straight line towards the shooter. Both arrows flew harmlessly over the Megarian's head; and before the Locrians could shoot again, Diphilus was

within ten paces of the nearest, and had sent the javelin clean through his body. The other turned, and fled round the corner of the road. Diphilus, instead of following, ran back to the opening of the little torrent, caught up a large stone from its bed, and dashed it down on the head of the Locrian, as he ran by in the road below. It brought him to the ground; and before he could recover himself, his conqueror had descended the bank, and was standing over him with the sword-point at his throat. The Locrian knew Diphilus, and, speaking to him by name, begged hard for mercy.

"What is your name, and your city or village?" asked the Megarian.

"I am Tolophus, the son of Chromon; I came from Helæ, in Locris."

"Where is the rest of your troop? are any more coming up the mountain?"

"No; all turned back two hours ago, except myself, my fellow-villager Kebes, and the Arcadian Komātas. We three kept together on our long and evil march."

"You must keep together on a still longer and worse march," said Diphilus, and plunged his sword in his breast. Atalanta came up at the instant, too late to stay her comrade's hand.

"What wicked and wanton blood-shedding is this!" she exclaimed indignantly.

"It is neither the one nor the other," replied Diphilus, coldly. "I recognised him as soon as he told me his name. He acted as a regular spy for Timarchus; and he knew far too much for our safety. The Arcadian lying there seems to be still alive. If he can live, without our lives being jeopardised, we will try to save him."

They walked to where Komātas was lying prone on the ground, with the javelin-head protruding at his back near the shoulder-blade. They saw that he was very young, almost a mere boy. They raised him carefully, bathed his face and head with water from the little torrent, and held a cruise of it to his lips. He drank eagerly; and then scanned their faces, as if to see if he could

recognise a neighbour in either of the two enemies, who were wearing his country's garb. He shook his head as if in disappointment; and then lay eying them calmly and firmly, as if ready to meet his fate without a gesture or sign of fear.

"'Tis a brave lad:" said Diphilus. "We must risk something to help him. We know your name, Komātas—from what part of Arcadia do you come?"

The wounded man murmured feebly, "Helissa."

"That is well," thought Diphilus. "Helissa is a long way from Cynæthæ." He then asked his companion, "What think you, Athanas, of the youth's wound? I believe I have known a man outlive a worse hurt."

"The wound is serious:" said Atalanta; "but I do not think that the javelin has pierced any vital part. We must get ready some bandages to staunch the gush of blood, that will follow the extraction of the javelin; and then I think we may venture on withdrawing it."

The bandages were quickly prepared by tearing up the ends of the dress; more water was given to the sufferer, and then Diphilus stretched out his hand to draw back the javelin from the wound.

"Not so:" said Atalanta. "The iron point would do more harm, while being dragged back through the body, than it has done in entering it. You must cut away the wooden shaft of the javelin, close to the beginning of the wound in his neck, and then you must draw the steel-head towards you at his back, —not with a jerk, but swiftly and steadily."

Diphilus did as she directed; and the weapon was quickly out of the body. Komātas fainted at first; but they restored him, and succeeded in stopping the violent outward hæmorrhage, which had been the first result of the operation. They placed him in as painless a position as possible on the bank, and set water within his reach. Then promising to send speedy help to him down from Œnoë, they swiftly resumed their way to the castle. As they passed the body

of the other Locrian, Kebes, they saw that he was stone dead.

When they drew near the castle-walls, Atalanta said to her companion: "Now that we are coming among friends, what name am I to bear? am I still to maintain the character, which you taught me, when we were leaving the enemy's camp?"

"Yes," he replied. "It will be safer for you to travel as Athanas of Arcadia. If you are known to be Atalanta of the Caucasus, you will probably be claimed as a slave."

"I fully comprehend the peril. There is no fear of my forgetting it. I understand perfectly that I am Athanas, son of Menon, and that I come from Cynæthæ, in Arcadia. But you yourself—what name and lineage do you intend to assume?"

"I am going to speak the plain truth," said Diphilus, "about what I am, and why I came here. Plain truth so far is my safest course. I shall say of you that you

are an Arcadian, whom I bribed to aid me in my escape. You must say the same; and it had better be said that it was I who killed Timarchus. Remember to speak in broken Doric. They will not ask you many questions; I shall have too much to tell them, to leave them much leisure for talking with you. Stop, there is a patrol at the next turning: I must hail him before he challenges us." He moved forward, and shouted to the Athenian soldier, who started as if alarmed at seeing armed men coming up from the hostile side of the pass.

"Stand ho!" cried Diphilus. "We are friends to Athens; there are but two of us. I am a Megarian refugee; my comrade is an Arcadian deserter. Bring us at once before Callias, your commandant; we have important intelligence for him."

Other soldiers of the garrison now came up; and placing the two strangers in the midst of them, so that escape should be impossible, they led them within the walls, and

to the quarters of Callias, the captain of their band, and the governor of the little fortress.

Callias had not yet left his bed, when the attendants informed him of what the soldiers had told them. He rose rather lazily and reluctantly, and sauntered into the outer room, where Diphilus and Atalanta were standing. Though by habit somewhat of an idle voluptuary, Callias was not wanting in natural shrewdness. He scrutinised the new-comers closely, and observed on them the marks of the recent conflict. "These blood-stains are quite fresh," he said to himself. "There must have been some fighting high up the pass." He then addressed them: "I hear that you are refugees and deserters. Well, it may be so; but spies sometimes assume those characters. I must know something more of you. What are your real names and native cities?"

The Megarian answered promptly: "Mine is a name known to many of you. I am Diphilus, son of Myron, of Megara. My

present garb is a mere disguise. My comrade is really an Arcadian. He is from Cynæthæ. His name is Athanas, son of Menon."

Callias started when Diphilus told his own name. The Megarian had said with truth that it was a name well known by the Athenians; he might have added with equal truth that it was a name well hated by them. His recent daring raid across the Salaminian Gulf upon the party of Lysicles had incensed all at Athens vehemently against him. "Hold out your hands—spread them well open," said Callias; "they will at any rate show me whether you are a mere landsman, or whether you are an old sailor, piratical or not as the case may be." Diphilus readily held his hands out; and Callias, who, like all other Athenians, was himself trained to the sea, looked closely at the palms and the inner parts of the fingers for the marks, which early and habitual handling of the oar never fails to leave there. "These are genuine sailor's hands," he said.

"How came this blood upon them? But stop. Before you answer, let your companion be led out of hearing. I will examine you separately. And, Tellides," he added, addressing one of the attendants, "go and ask my friend Phæax to come here. I shall be glad to have the help of his opinion about these men. It is fortunate that he is in the castle. I wish that Iophon had not hurried on to Athens. Yet," he added, half to himself, "the judgment of such a timid, nervous being as Iophon would not be of much value."

Atalanta was led from the room. She understood from Callias's words that Phæax, the envoy who had been to Platæa about the sham negotiations, and in whose train she was to have escaped, had halted at Œnoë on his return to Athens. She was at first alarmed lest Iophon, who had taken the opportunity for escape which had been designed for her, should also be in the castle He had seen so much of her while in Platæa, that he was likely to recognise her. But Iophon

(as Callias's last observation indicated) had been so sensitive to the jests and sarcasms about his cowardice, which he heard at the evening banquet in Œnoë, that he had procured a mule, and journeyed on towards Athens over night. Greatly relieved at finding that she was not to be confronted with him, and carefully thinking over the instructions of Diphilus as to the character which she was to bear, and the story which she was to tell, Atalanta calmly waited for her turn for examination.

Phæax heard with interest that a deserter, who was supposed to be the renowned corsair Diphilus, had come into the castle. He hastened to where Callias waited for him. They seated themselves together, so that they might converse if they pleased without being overheard by the person under examination, and Callias then resumed his interrogatories.

"Where have you been for the last two or three days?"

Diphilus promptly replied, "I have been

with Timarchus the Corinthian in the Peloponnesian camp before Platæa."

"What corps did you command or serve in?"

"None. I went there to ask Timarchus to pay me for having carried off the two Aspasian girls from your general, Lysicles, at the islet below Mount Ægialeus."

"What happened yesterday at Platæa? I know of the breaking-off of the truce from my friend here."

"We tried to burn the town, and failed. We gave an assault, and failed."

"Take heed what you say. I know of the attempt to burn the town; but I have reason to believe that your army did not make an assault."

"The whole army did not assault, though a general assault had been ordered. They thought that the rain-storm, which put the fire out, was an order from Jupiter to cease fighting. Our column,—I mean the Corinthian column,—entered the town, but we were unsupported, and were beaten back."

"Where is Timarchus?"

"In Tartarus, as I believe, and as I fervently hope. I killed him."

"You killed him? Why, when, and how?"

"He got a decree passed by the Council of Twelve at Megara, condemning me to death as a traitor, and as a partizan of Athens. He was going to have me arrested in the camp, and put to death yesterday afternoon. I stabbed him by surprise in his tent, by the aid of the Arcadian, who came in here with me, and whom I bribed heavily with Timarchus's money. I have made my escape. I am to pay Athanas at the end of the journey. Look, here is the gold ready for him."

"Is that blood on your hand the blood of Timarchus?"

"No. It is the blood of a much better man. We were pursued. Three of the pursuers came up with us at the zig-zags, about half a mile above the Oak-heads. Two of the three lie dead there; the third is

living, though badly wounded. I wish you would send down, and have him brought in and looked to. We spared him, because he is a mere boy, and had fought bravely, and because he is an Arcadian and my comrade's fellow-countryman. The two whom we killed were Locrian bowmen."

"He shall be sent for. Myrus, take a double patrol force and four slaves and a litter. Go down to the zig-zags, and bring in this wounded man, if he is there. Look also for the bodies of the others, and see if what we have just heard appears to be true. Be watchful against ambushes. Double the outposts for the day down Cithæron, and let patrols be pushed forward to twice the usual distance. Diphilus, if that is really your name, you may stand aside for a few minutes, while we question your companion. Bring in Athanas."

Atalanta walked quietly into the hall and stood before them. She had exchanged glances with Diphilus, as she stepped by him, and his smile assured her that all was

going well. "Athanas," said Callias, "what did King Archidamus do yesterday?"

Atalanta replied, in broken Doric: "The Spartan king tried to burn the town, but Lyceian Jove forbade it. Some of our troops despised the commandment of Jupiter, and got into the town, but they were worsted."

"Did anything happen to Timarchus, the Corinthian general?"

While Atalanta hesitated in her reply to this interrogatory, Callias's assessor, Phæax interposed. He was a renowned rhetorician, accustomed to take at least his fair share in all kinds of talking, and could not endure to play the part of a mute performer any longer. Moreover, the uncouth dialect in which Atalanta purposely spoke, might well be supposed to jar on the nerves of one so affectedly exquisite in his diction as Phæax.* He turned to his colleague and said, lispingly, "What a dreadful patois these Ar-

* Phœax is a real historical personage. He is ridiculed in 'The Knights' of Aristophanes as the chief of the young Euphuists of the time.

cadians utter! They boast that their race is older than the moon. They certainly talk as if their mouths were full of chaos. Why should we waste time in listening to the barbarisms of this rustic? I suppose you have no real doubt about the substantial accuracy of these men's story?"

Callias replied, in a lower tone, "I feel sure that we have Diphilus the Megarian in the castle; and too much caution cannot be taken when we receive such a guest."

"Then," rejoined Phæax, "let him be guarded, till the wounded man of whom he spoke, is brought in. Let that man be questioned, and we shall see if he confirms Diphilus. If so, his corroboration will be of more value than any given by the deserter now before us, inasmuch as it will come from an enemy of the Megarian pirate, and not from a comrade. But, meanwhile, let us get some breakfast. I hope you have not exhausted your stores of that excellent Chian wine, which consoled us so well last night amid these grim mountains."

Callias laughed, and said, "You seem to like my Chian wine, as well as poor Leon did, when he halted here a month ago in his march to that miserable Platæan prison." Callias then ordered that the two deserters should be placed in separate guard-rooms, and supplied with proper refreshment. "Be sure," he told his men,—"be sure to let me know when they bring the wounded man to the castle. I will come and examine him myself. I will not torture you, Phæax, by making you a listener; for he too is an Arcadian."

The little court of inquiry now adjourned further proceedings, and its members sauntered away to the more agreeable occupation, which had been suggested. Diphilus and Atalanta were guarded as the commander had ordered, but they were released before noon. The soldiers who had been sent to reconnoitre the pass, brought in a report fully agreeing with the Megarian's narrative. They also carefully carried to the castle the wounded Arcadian, Komātas,

whom they found lying on the bank, as Diphilus had described. Callias compassionated his youth. "Surely," said he, "we have here the Arcadian hero-boy, whose valour and whose doom our Æschylus has celebrated." He caused all possible attention to be paid to the wound. Strengthened for the time by a draught of wine, Komātas told him how part of the army had attacked, but had been defeated; how afterwards there was a rumour that Timarchus had been stabbed by Diphilus, and that Diphilus, with an accomplice, had fled to the mountain. A large reward for their capture had been offered, "And this," said Komātas, "made me and others follow them."

Callias was perfectly satisfied with this evidence; and returning to his quarters, desired that Diphilus and Athanas should be again brought before him. "I know now," he said to them, "that you are what you say, and not spies. You can go on to Athens in the train of Phœax, who will resume his journey thither this afternoon.

On your arrival there you must go at once to the Prytanæum, and report yourselves to the senators on duty there for the day."

Diphilus thought of the symptoms of exhaustion, which Atalanta had shown that morning, and said, hesitatingly, "My comrade was sorely bruised and shaken by a bad fall in the pass; he is hardly equal to a long march to-day."

Callias laughed, and replied, "There will be no long marches, when Phæax leads the way. A few miles down hill cannot be too much for an Arcadian mountaineer, even if he has had a few tumbles among our Cithæron's rocks. You had better go on with Phæax; it will save you from being stopped and questioned by every military officer, and by every little komarch along your road. Phæax will talk to you all the time; but that will give you little trouble, as he loves the sound of his own voice, and seldom stops for an answer."

Atalanta eagerly interposed with an assurance of being quite ready for the march.

"That is right," said Callias. "Phæax will start in about an hour. Meanwhile you, Athanas, may like to go and sit with your wounded fellow-countryman. Diphilus, I shall myself be glad to have some talk with you about the besieging army."

While he was yet speaking, one of the attendants, who had been left with the wounded Arcadian, entered, and told them that Komātas was sinking fast and earnestly desired to see his fellow-countryman, Athanas, before he died. Atalanta hastened to the room where the poor boy had been placed. He was stretched on a couch, motionless; and the ashy colour of death was already overspreading his hands and face. Atalanta saw at once that the case was hopeless; but she poured a spoonful of wine between his lips, and the lamp of life still flickered a little longer. Komātas smiled faintly, and beckoned with his finger for her to bend her head down to listen. He then whispered, at intervals, "Athanas, you will some day revisit our native moun-

tains. Go to Helissa. There is a group of cottages at the east of the village. Ask for the house of Thymætas. It is my house."

Atalanta said to him, "You want me to take some message to your parents, or your brothers and sisters there?"

"I have none," said the dying boy; "and there has been little love between my uncle and me. But I have a dog there. I trained him. He is,—at least, he was,—the best hound, that ever throttled a wolf, or ran down a stag—and, oh! so fond of me. He is a greyish-white dog; his name is Lampon. He will soon be old and useless, and they will not be kind to him. Buy him of them. My arms will sell for some money. Thymætas will part with anything for money. Take care of old Lampon, will you?"

Atalanta sobbed, "I will, indeed."

The boy gave her a smile of gratitude and happiness. The last sands of life were exhausted with his last words. In a few moments the death-rattle began, and then all was over. Atalanta had tended the

sick and the wounded during pestilence and warfare too often not to have become familiar with the aspect of death; but there was something in the fate of this poor mountaineer—so young, so brave, so simple, so childishly affectionate—that touched her deeply. She closed his eyes, and was still gazing earnestly on the face of the dead, when Callias entered, saying—

"Athanas, the line of march is formed, and you are stayed for."

Atalanta pointed to the body, and said, "You will respect his remains?"

"Assuredly we will," replied the Athenian. "He died in fight like a brave Hellenic warrior, and as such he shall be honoured after death."

Atalanta then departed from the room; and was soon on the road to Athens, sometimes wishing that she herself had perished, before so much life had been sacrificed for her sake; but more often thinking of Leon, and praying that her life might be spared a little longer for the sake of devoting it to obtain his safety.

## CHAPTER XI.

"

But who, scarce less by every gazer eyed,
Walks yonder, swinging with a stalwart stride?
With that vast bulk of chest and limb assigned
So oft to men, who subjugate their kind:
So sturdy Cromwell pushed broad-shouldered on—
So brawny Cleon bawled his Agora down?
Aye, mark him well. The schemer's subtle eye,
The stage-mime's plastic lip your search defy.
He, like Lysander, never deems it sin
To eke the lion's with the fox's skin.
The blood all fervour, and the brain all guile—
The patriot's bluntness, and the bondman's wile.

THE NEW TIMON. *Lord Lytton.*

CORNELIA (*à Fulvio*):

Di Libertade
Che parli tu? e con chi? Non hai pudore,
Non hai virtute, e libero ti chiami?
'Zelo di libertà, pretesto eterno
D'ogni delitto! Frangere le leggi
Impunamente, seminar par tutto
Il furor delle parte, e con atroci
Mille calummie tormentar quelcunque

Non vi somiglia; insidiar la vita,
Le sostanze, la fama; anco gli accenti,
Anco i pensieri incatenar; poi lordi //
D'ogni sozzura predicar virtude,
Carita di fratelli; attribuir vi
Titol di puri cittadini, e sempre
Sulle labbra la patria e nel cor mai;
Ecco l'egregia, la sublime, e santa
Liberta de' tuoi pare, e non de' Gracci.

MONTI. *Cajo Gracco.*

THE prediction of Callias that a march under the command of Phæax would not be a hasty or laborious one, proved perfectly true. The elegant rhetorician made a three days' journey to Athens; and he and his companions had at every halting-place the advantage of all the comforts and conveniences, which the local authorities could provide for the returning ambassador. A well-known public speaker in those days was like a well-known writer in an important public paper at the present time, and no one cared to incur his ill-will. Callias was equally right in foreboding that Phæax would bestow an ample share of his loquacity on any audience that he could command. He chiefly favoured

Diphilus with his conversation, or, rather, with his dissertations. He sometimes asked the Megarian a question on matters connected with the war and the naval resources of the Peloponnesians—inasmuch as such topics came often before the Public Assembly at Athens, and Phæax was glad of materials for a display of knowledge about any of them. But he generally delivered sparkling essays of his own on military tactics, on the construction of docks, on agriculture, on dithyrambics, on the ballot, on the nature of the Holy, of the Just, and of the Unjust; on cookery, on the currency, on the true theory of musical concords; on the geometrical laws of the Kosmos, and the proper height of an actor's buskins. Nothing came amiss to the all-accomplished Rhetor, who prided himself on being able to speak strikingly and persuasively on any question, and on any side of any question. The shrewd, common-sense man of the world, whom he thus harangued, listened in pretended awe and admiration of talents so vast

and versatile, but in real surprise that such a chatterer should ever be ranked among politicians. Diphilus thought to himself, "If coxcombs like this have taken Pericles' place at the helm, Athens is like to be tossed about a good deal in the war." Fortunately for Atalanta, Phæax considered an unlettered Arcadian to be unworthy of his notice, and was content that one, whom he called an inarticulate clown, should journey quietly along a little apart from the rest of the company.

The Attic territory, through which they passed, was less bare and wasted, than might have been expected to be the case in a country, which had been for three years at war, and which lay open to the immeasurably superior land-forces of the enemy. But there had been no invasion of Attica in that year, in consequence of the Peloponnesian armies being directed against Platæa; and although the devastation wrought by the hostile inroad of the preceding year had been very severe and extensive, some spots

had escaped the enemy's ravages; and the Peloponnesian troops had retired after a short occupation, in alarm at the pestilence which was then raging in Athens. The Athenians had gladly issued forth from the crowded city when the enemy retreated. Many had re-occupied the remnants of their country homes; and a few had sown their lands, on the chance that something might occur to prevent or delay a new invasion by the enemy. When spring and early summer came without bringing the Peloponnesians, many more of the Athenians had resumed for a time the country life, which, as a people, they passionately loved, and which they had abandoned with the greatest reluctance at the beginning of the war. At a village called Daphnæ (i.e. the Bay-trees), where Phæax halted on the morning of their last day's march, Atalanta heard the peasants singing a rustic song, some of the sentiments of which were afterwards embodied by Aristophanes in his comedy of 'The Peace.'

Tell me can a purer pastime in this world of ours be found
Than to hear the shower descending on the seed-corn in the ground,
When the lovely holy Seasons Heaven's blessings to us bring,
And the husbandman is resting from the labours of the spring?
From the boundary hedge a neighbour calls to us with cheery din
"Come along, my jovial Head-man, come and have a drinking-in.
Here no more the vile Drill Sergeant scarlet coat and plumes shall show.
He no more shall keep us staring with 'Eyes right' all fixt in row.
Drink at ease. Look sleek and cozy. Heaven makes the harvest grow."*

While Atalanta was listening to them, Diphilus came up to her. He had escaped for a time from the side of Phœax, who was

* Οὐ γὰρ ἔσθ' ἥδιον ἢ τυχεῖν μὲν ἤδη 'σπαρμένα,
Τὸν Θεὸν δ' ἐπιψαχάζειν, καί τιν' εἰπεῖν γείτονα
Εἰπέ μοι τί τηνικαῦτα δρῶμεν, ὦ Κωμαρχίδη;
'Εμπιεῖν ἔμοιγ' ἀρέσκει τοῦ Θεοῦ δρῶντος καλῶς.
Χᾶμα φήμ', Ὧραι φίλαι,
Κᾶτα γίγνομαι παχὺς
Τηνικαῦτα τοῦ Θέρους,
Μᾶλλον ἢ Θεοῖσιν ἐχθρὸν Ταξίαρχον προσβλέπων
Τρεῖς λόφους ἔχοντα καὶ φοινικίδ' ὀξεῖαν πάνυ.
ARIST. Eιρ. 1140—1143, 1165, 1170—1173.

replying copiously, and completely to his own satisfaction, to an address made to him by the head-man of the village. Diphilus looked a little enviously at the scene around, and said:

"The Peloponnesians do not do the burning and pillaging work, so well as your Athenian friends do it to my poor little country. But I sought you, that we may arrange where we are to meet in Athens. Your examination at the Prytanæum will be a mere formality; but the officials will probably ask me a great many questions, and I may be detained there for hours. I suppose you mean to keep up your disguise, at least for the present?"

"Certainly," said Atalanta.

"I think that you do wisely. Where do you intend to lodge?"

"I shall first go to my old banker, Chremylus. I can trust him thoroughly. My place of residence will be determined by the information, which I receive from

him. Where do you expect to find shelter at Athens?"

"There are several Megarian refugees there already. They will by this time know of the decree which has made me one of them. I shall easily find them, and I am sure of a welcome from them. No fellowship like that of hate. Where can I meet you to-morrow?"

"Come at noon on the day after to-morrow to the house of Chremylus, and you will find me. Ask for me of course under the name of Athanas. Are you in want of money for immediate supply?"

"No; I am well-found for a month or two's cruise. I made Timarchus pay me after he was dead. By rights I ought to hand half of this gold from his coffers over to you. It was earned by your capture."

"I have no need of it; and even the extremest need would not induce me to touch it. Phæax is looking round for you. I need not bid you be cautious. You may in turn rely on me."

"I fully trust both your sense and your courage. Only do not give way to wild fancies and groundless remorse about the death of a wretch, who deserved death a thousandfold at your hands, or about the men whom you saw killed afterwards. There will be more work of this kind to do before we can liberate Leon!"

They resumed their march, and reached the environs of Athens while the day was yet little spent. Phæax made another short halt at the beautiful suburb of Colonos, which lay so near to the city walls, that it had wholly escaped the ravages of the hostile troops throughout the war. The Athenian cavalry had always been strong enough to repel the enemy's marauders from the immediate vicinity of the city; and King Archidamus had been too prudent to draw up his main force very close to the walls, lest part of his line should be surprised and broken by a sudden attack from the town. The village and Sacred Grove of Colonos were situate along the slope of a gentle hill; and

near them, on the right, spread the rich olive-plantations of Academia, afterwards immortalized by being the favourite place where Plato meditated and taught. The little river Cephisus, and the numerous still smaller streams that feed it, flowed along the meads beneath the shade of plane-trees and oleanders, and other flowering trees and shrubs. The Sacred Grove itself overspread the upper part of the Hill of Colonos with a dense vesture of vines, of olives, of bay-trees, and of ivy, from among which taller and more stately trees, of majestic height and venerable age rose at irregular intervals; in many places they interlaced their foliage, so as to form a second, and, as it were, an outer canopy against the sun and wind. Ancient tradition, and the yet stronger religion of the people, had dedicated this grove to the Dread Avenging Powers—the awful and wrathful Sisterhood, who were called by an euphemism "The Well-meaning Ones,"—"the Eumenides," a word which we habitually, but most inaccurately, trans-

late as the Furies. The rich melody of innumerable nightingales floated down to the delighted traveller's ear, as he paused on the winding-path that led through the outskirts of the holy wood; and the shrill chirpings of the cicada on the plane-trees sounded up to him from the banks of the streams below. Atalanta gazed with pleasure ever new on the well-known and long-loved scenery. The beautiful lines, in which Sophocles (who was born at Colonos) has pourtrayed for all ages the glories of his birthplace, rose to her memory.*

But the recollection of the great Sophoclean drama made, unhappily, Atalanta call also to mind the awe expressed in it at the consequences of offending the Dread Goddesses of the region; and she bethought herself also, with fear and trembling, that the special mission of those Terrible Ones was to execute the curses of parents upon children. She shud-

* Soph. *Œd. Col.* 670.

dered, and looked down as if in prayer to those in the realms below. But she soon rallied her energies; and, as she raised her face towards heaven, she saw full in view before her, through the translucent Attic atmosphere, the lofty shrines of the glorious city in their serene, unsullied brightness, and their graceful and gracious symmetry and sublimity; shrines sacred to the Powers of Heaven itself. Within her sight was the Areopagus, Mars' Hill, where, according to the old legend enshrined in the Æschylean Oresteia, the Eumenides had, beneath the influence of the Celestials Pallas Athene and Apollo laid aside their vengeance against a long-devoted and persecuted victim. The Temple of Apollo was at the base of the Areopagus. The three temples of the tutelary Goddess stood more conspicuous on its lofty Acropolis in the back-ground. Highest of the three, and highest of all works of nature or of art in Athens rose the Parthenon. Atalanta looked long to its snow-white marble portico,

which was clearly discernible from Colonos, and she prayed fervently to the Virgin-Deity, in whose honour it had been raised, for guidance and deliverance in the coming hours of peril.

They entered Athens through the Thriasian gates by the road, that led towards and along the most important parts of the town.* They traversed part of the Market-place, the Agora, which occupied the valley between the Areopagus on the left hand, and the place of public assembly, the Pnyx, on the right hand. A debate was going on in the Pnyx, which had drawn thither most of the Athenian citizens. But some keen traders were still in their shops; and some inveterate gossips loitered about their favourite scandal-corners, having succeeded in escaping the daub of the vermilioned rope, with which the State-beadles on an Assembly-day swept the Agora and other public places, marking for a fine all who were laggarts in performing a citizen's primary duty, that

* See Wordsworth's 'Athens,' p. 146, and note.

of attending the debates and votes of the National Assembly. Resident aliens were in the busy Market-place in great numbers; and there were still greater throngs of strangers, of natives of the numerous Greek States in alliance with Athens, and of men of many races from regions still more remote. Some came for political, many more for mercantile purposes. Some came for lawsuits. Some were literary men, to whom literature was a trade as well as a profession; itinerant lecturers, or reciters of poetry, teachers of rhetoric, of casuistry, of geometry, of arithmetic, of music, of almost every art and science that then was in existence. Many also came to learn: among these last were youths eminent for high birth and ample wealth in their native countries, who all flocked to Athens as to the University of the civilized world. It was the policy and the pride of the Athenians to give every facility to the free influx of strangers, and to encourage them not only in inspecting the works of art and the

material resources of the city, and in attending her festivals and her chief scenic representations, but also in observing and studying her institutions, and in watching the free play of speculative reason and of political life, that was more active within her walls, than in any other part of the world in ancient times, and almost more so than in any part of the world in the present age.

Diphilus had not been in Athens for many years. The prohibitory decree against the Megarians had been in force for a considerable period before the war; and even when in earlier times he had visited Athens, his maritime occupations and tastes had made him more familiar with the lower town of Piræus than with the upper city. The signs of wealth and of comfort, and of commercial activity, which he saw everywhere around him, moved his admiration, more than statues and temples. He thought, "This city can never be conquered except by herself." Then, as he looked to the

right, and saw the low rocky hill of the Pnyx, the place of public assembly, where thousands of Athenian citizens were then congregated, and as he heard their impassioned cheering, and even caught the voice, though not the words, of the favourite demagogue, who was evidently haranguing them, Diphilus thought also to himself, "And yonder is the place in which Athens will be conquered."

Atalanta recognised the voice of the orator well. There was only one speaker, who possessed such power of lungs, or who used his utmost power of lungs so vehemently. Cleon was speaking. Atalanta knew the man, and both loathed and scorned him. She and Aspasia had often gone in the disguise of foreign merchants to the precincts of the Assembly, near enough to hear the debates. This was in the time of Pericles. Atalanta had been accustomed to listen with admiration, and almost adoration to that King of Men in statesmanship—that Demigod in oratory,

when he "stood forth eloquently" to "wield at will the fierce democracy," to stir up its tumultuous energies when it pleased him to "fulmine over Greece,"—or with equal might and majesty to curb and control an angry and over-excited people, when in his all-sufficing judgment the public good required caution and moderation. The demeanour and the delivery of Pericles had ever been as dignified as his sentiments and his style. But Cleon, who came forward as a politician towards the close of the career of Pericles, had introduced a new kind of oratory in the public assemblies. He used violent and often vulgar gesticulations. He roared out his torrents of personal abuse with the full tide of a stentorian throat; though his voice was also remarkably rich and flexible, and enabled him, when he saw fit opportunity, to divert his audience with a humourous story, or with a sly jest at an adversary's expense. These he could deliver in the clearest and most effective undertones. His maxim was, "Anything to create sensation,

anything to produce effect." He was known to be mercenary in council, and a coward in the field. Yet, being aided (except in the field) by the two powers which have so often pushed politicians and advocates into advancement—the powers of fearlessness and shamelessness—he rapidly acquired influence and importance as a speaker in the public assembly, and as an accuser in state-trials before the popular Courts of Judicature. And even those, who hated Cleon most, could not in their hearts deny that his talents were considerable. His vocabulary of every kind was marvellously copious and ready. His sentences were always clearly arranged and perfectly intelligible. He had a shrewd insight into all the eccentricities and weaknesses, as well as into all the vices of human nature. Above all, he had an instinctive tact in discerning the humour of his audience at the time when he had to address them. To employ an expressive metaphor, which I have heard applied to a great modern advocate, Cleon always knew

the atmosphere of the Court. He had also great skill in forecasting the turns, which public opinion was likely to take,—in watching the first signs of a change of weather. Cleon then became ostentatiously earnest in patronising the policy which he saw coming into favour. He affected to head the movement; and he pretended to have given an impulse, while in reality he did nothing but stalk in front. The description given a few years afterwards by Plato of Athenian public speakers (unjust if taken generally) was strictly true of Cleon. He was "a bold spirit, forward in discerning and adapting himself to the temper of the public," and "with a general aptitude for flattery." But though a systematic adulator of the majority, Cleon had the wit often to assume the tone and manner of a sturdy, independent, rough-spoken citizen, who hated the tricks and vanities by which other orators duped the good easy people. He thus got a name as being the people's true friend; and he was

enabled to gratify his envious spite at the superior accomplishments of his competitors. Atalanta had specially hated him for the virulent injustice and the scurrilous personalities of his attacks on Pericles. As she now caught the sound of his voice, she thought to herself — "And this is the man whose co-operation I must purchase, and whose good-will I must try to propitiate!"

Phæax had been one of the first to observe that a debate was going forward in the Public Assembly. The temptation to leave the party under his charge, and to go and take part in the "war of words," proved, after a few minutes' hesitation, irresistible. He told Diphilus and Atalanta that his country imperatively required his immediate presence and service in the Pnyx, and he bade them meet him at the Prytaneum when the afternoon shadow on the dial at the Tower of the Winds should have come to six feet. He then hurried up the hill to the place of assembly, in time to be told

what the debate was about, and to pronounce an artistic exordium of an oration on a subject, of which he knew next to nothing. The impatience of his audience cut short the harangue; and he was well bespattered with ridicule and abuse by Hyperbolus, who followed him in the debate, and who was a debased kind of Cleon, equal to his original in scurrility, approaching him in impudence, but falling far below him in energy and ability. Phæax, however, found ample consolation in the praises which he received from some of the gilded youth of Athens, the Euphuists of the age, who prided themselves on their mincing elegance of phrase and utterance, on the transcendental quaintness of their metaphors, and on the fine-drawn subtlety of their syllogisms and distinctions. They looked to Phæax as the chief of their school; they quoted him in his absence; they applauded him when present; and they did their best to uphold him in renown as the refined champion in the strife of debate, who wielded ethe-

real weapons against coarse and insensible antagonists.

Atalanta, when released from the elegant ambassador, turned towards the north-eastern corner of the Agora, and entered a house, the size and appearance of which, as viewed from the street, did not betoken remarkable rank or wealth in the owner; though the low walls were unusually massive, and the windows and doors were more strongly secured against robbers than was generally thought necessary in a dwelling-house within Athens. On entering through the porch, numerous back courts opening one from the other were visible; and the great extent of the premises could be partially observed. Many desks and tables of change were ranged along the buildings, where sate high-priced and highly-educated slaves, who carried on the subordinate part of the extensive business of the great banker Chremylus. Huge books and rolls of accounts were ranged along the walls; and square massive chests stood on the floors,

which contained not only specie, but title-deeds, plate, and valuables of every kind, deposited there as security for loans, or for safe custody, by Chremylus's clients. Merchants, sea-captains, farmers, traders and non-traders of every kind, all looking serious and earnest, thronged the courts and passages. Passing quickly along to a little office in a corner, where an aged slave was sitting with several messengers round him waiting for orders, Atalanta leaned down and whispered a few words in the old man's ear. They were pass-words, communicated only to clients of special importance, and which obtained for the favoured few immediate access to the banker himself, without waiting for their turn among the crowd who desired such audience. The old slave bent his head in recognition of the signal-words, and calling one of the messengers to him, gave him some instructions in a whisper. He then by a gesture directed Atalanta to follow the man. A narrow winding-passage led to a small retired apartment, where

Atalanta found Chremylus—as usual, with no companions except his account-books, and his maps of lands and seas. These last were rare possessions in those times; but Chremylus had collected maps and charts during many years with great care and expense. Some were graven on tablets of brass; some on wooden slabs; some were traced and shaded on sheets of parchment. Besides the full information, which Greek mariners and travellers were able to give of Greece itself, of the eastern coasts of the Mediterranean, of the sea-board of the Propontis, the Euxine and the Palus Mæotis, of the coasts of the Adriatic, of Lower Italy, of Sicily, of Gaul as far as Massilia, and of the North-African region of Cyrene, Chremylus had diligently sought and noted all that could be learned of other regions from Syrian, from Egyptian, from Carthaginian, and Tyrrhenian seamen and traders. One large map, formed of several skins of parchment sewn together, spread nearly over one of the walls of the room. It purported

to be a map of the whole world. Most of the regions near the Mediterranean Sea, and the islands of that sea were given accurately; and names of cities and harbours were written over most of these localities in considerable numbers. Beyond them, the central and eastern parts of the Persian Empire in Asia, including the Punjaub, were delineated in general outline, with the principal rivers and mountains and a few great cities marked by their names. Ægypt and the Carthaginian dominions in Northern Africa were sketched in the same manner. The outline of a large lump of blank territory to the south of these last indicated that Africa was known to be an extensive continent; and a track was drawn to show the course by which the Phœnician mariners had once circumnavigated it from the Mediterranean to the Red Sea. The headlands of the Spanish and Gaulish coasts along the Atlantic were clearly defined. The countries near the water-systems of the rivers now called the Don and the Volga, the Danube,

the Po, the Rhone, the Rhine, and the Loire, were figured more or less vaguely; as were the northern coasts of Gaul (called "Land of Celts"), and those of the amber-producing districts to the east and north-east of Gaul. Beyond Gaul, and opposite to its north-western corner, appeared two considerable islands. One was marked as Ierne—"The Sacred Island;" the other bore the name of Albion. The lower south-western corner of this island, and an adjacent cluster of little islets, showed in broad characters the title of "Cassiterides" —that is, "The Tin Islands:" but over the surface of the chief part of Albion appeared written the description "Savage Tribes."

Atalanta soon made known to the old banker her real name, the events which had befallen her, and the object of her return to Athens. She only kept back her own share in the death of Timarchus. The old man knew and loved her well. Her father and he had been friends in early as well as in

advanced life, and they had shared many perilous adventures in far distant climes. He listened to her tale with sad but affectionate interest. When it was concluded, he laid his hand on her head—"Poor child!" he said, "your life of care has begun early. Would that your heart had been set on some other object. Yet there are many worse men than Leon; and what you are doing for him, must bind him to you indissolubly, if he have any honour and feeling in him. I believe that, under all circumstances, the Megarian's advice to you has reason in it; but it may be improved on. Bribery may do much in Athens, but it can do ten times more in Sparta. I know that you would not shrink from either the toil or the peril of a journey thither. There is a chance of negotiations with Peloponnesus being re-opened. The merchants and the wealthy here all long for a cessation of hostilities; and the taste of country life, which so many of the Athenians have enjoyed during this spring and summer, has revived generally

the desire for peace, which, as you may remember, was so vehement at the close of the dreadful year of the Plague. The Lacedæmonians then haughtily rejected our advances. But many of their confederacy are now weary of the war; and new proposals would be received in a different spirit. All depends on the temper, that is, on the self-interest of our orators here, and of the Ephori at Sparta. One of the present Ephori I know to be as venal as are our two factious statesmen,—our Hyperbolus and Cleon. Not that Hyperbolus is worth bribing. But Cleon must be won over to abstain from fierce opposition, even if he will not promote a pacific policy. If he will not bark on our side, he must at least be muzzled."

"Could he not, if we paid him well, induce the Assembly to vote a strong expedition to break through the besiegers' lines and relieve Platæa?"

"That is quite hopeless. The other scheme is possible. Many will add their

money to yours if I give them the hint for so employing it; but similar machinery must be set in action at Sparta, and I know no one else who would venture thither. Cleon may be sounded this afternoon. That is, if he has carried his decree in the Assembly this morning for doubling the contribution of those wretched allied towns on the Hellespont, which omitted to send him his annual bribe this spring. If he is successful and good-humoured, he may be approached with safety. If he has gone back beaten to growl in his den, you had better wait for a few days before you go near him. We shall soon know the issue of the debate. Meanwhile, you can remain here. What place in Athens do you mean to make your home?"

"I shall go to Aspasia."

"Heaven avert the omen of your words! Do you not know that Aspasia is dead?"

Atalanta wrung her hands, and exclaimed: "Woe is me for the tidings that greet me in Athens; for the loss of the kindest, the truest friend, the noblest woman in both

head and heart that ever lived! When died she?"

"She was one of the last victims of the slowly retreating pestilence. She was stricken and died about a week after your capture. Do not mourn for her. Life had been no blessing to her since the death of Pericles."

"Has Melissa returned to Athens? Is anything known of her?"

"It is believed that she has been carried away into the Persian dominions."

"Where is Diotima?"

"Alive, and in Attica. But you surely will not take up your abode with that half-mad being? You shall have apartments here. You will retain your disguise and your assumed name. There is nothing very unusual in visitors from all parts of Greece—aye, from all parts of the world—coming here and abiding for some days in disguise on important business. Few will ask any questions about you; and, if asked, no one will answer them."

Atalanta gladly accepted the old man's

offer. He insisted on having the rolls of accounts brought in, which contained the entries respecting her property; and he made her note how much interest had accrued to her during her absence from Athens. "We must draw a talent from your capital this afternoon," he said, "as a propitiatory cake for the Cerberus of the Pnyx. Do not use much ceremony in offering it. Tell Cleon that you are one of those who admire his genius, and who feel grateful for his exertions in the general cause of the Many against the Few throughout Greece: that in your opinion men, who devote themselves, as he does, to the public good, must do so to the neglect of their own affairs, and to the consequent detriment of their private fortunes: that it is, therefore, the duty of all true democrats to contribute according to their means to the support of their self-sacrificing champions. Say that you have brought a slight token of your esteem, and that you hope soon to have a worthier testimonial to lay before him. Then go boldly to real

business. Do not talk about yourself; and parry any questions which he may put to you. He understands these kinds of dialogues, and will not interrogate you often. Tell him that it is of deep importance to the good cause, and to you in particular, to save the lives of the honest men now shut up in Platæa. Hint to him that a peace, or a long truce may effect this, and that there is a chance of pacific measures being proposed. Say that you consider that such a measure will be worth at least six talents. If he listens, but hesitates, raise the value to eight or to ten. He thoroughly understands what all this means. He will answer you pretty frankly, and you may trust what he says on these subjects, which is more than can be said of him as to many others. To give him his due, I never knew Cleon play false in these bargains. Now go and rest yourself. I hear, by the increased noise in the Agora, that the people are coming back from the Assembly. There goes Cleon—you can see him through this little window.

He and Hyperbolus are laughing and jesting together. They have evidently carried the day. Go to Cleon's house in about an hour. He will have had his noon-tide cup of wine, probably two or three, and will be in one of his best tempers. I will send a slave with you, who knows the side-entrance to his house, and who knows Cleon's confidential servant, who will at once give you access to the great man, before whom we now all must tremble. Ho, Xanthias, Xanthias!" A well-dressed, intelligent-looking Phœnician slave answered the call. His master whispered a few words to him, and then said to Atalanta: "Athanas, you had now better retire to the apartments which Xanthias will show you. You can think over the calculations which we have been making. At the fitting time, Xanthias will summon you, and will conduct you to where you must make your venture. He will carry with him what you require. Let me see you again in the evening. Meanwhile, may Zeus the Preserver watch over you!"

Atalanta did as her old friend enjoined. She sate sadly mourning over the death of Aspasia, till Xanthias appeared to conduct her to the house of Cleon. That house fronted towards the Agora; but Xanthias led the way along a winding back street to a side-door much frequented by petitioners, who sought the presence, and had to buy the favour of the potent demagogue. In those days "Paper Credit" had not yet "lent Corruption lighter wings to fly."* Presents were brought in substantial reality, which would have made an awkward appearance if displayed in the Market-place; and even gold, if agreeable from its amount, might there have become inconveniently conspicuous. Having ascertained that no one was watching, Xanthias quickly opened the side-door without knocking, and as soon as Atalanta had entered with him, he closed it with equally noiseless rapidity. An attendant, who came to meet them in the passage, knew the banker's messenger perfectly well;

* POPE. *Ep. to Lord Bathurst.*

and by the judicious donative of a handful of drachmas to the great man's great man, Xanthias quickly obtained for his companion admission to Cleon's presence. Placing on a table the golden talent (which had been decorously wrapped in linen and carried in a close basket) Xanthias retired from the room with the attendant, who had introduced them, leaving Atalanta to commence her negotiations.

Cleon was reclining on an easy couch placed at a little distance from the northern wall of the room, beneath a half-opened window, so that no glare or heat was admitted, while a current of air from without played freely over him as he lay. He had been heated by his oratorical exertions of the morning, and he had first cooled and then renewed that heat by the potations, in which he had been indulging, according to his wont, though he was too well-seasoned a drinker, and was also far too prudent ever to go so far as decided inebriety. One wine-flask lay empty on the floor; another, freshly

opened, stood on a low table near the couch, with a silver goblet of water, and a large drinking-cup of ivory and gold near it. Several other costly articles of plate were piled near, and some small statues of great price stood in the room. The tapestry and the carpets were from Tyrian looms, and of brightest dyes. Every article of furniture was of expensive foreign wood, and richly carved. Altogether, there was ample proof to the eye that the owner was either a man of vast wealth of his own, or one on whom wealthy men were in the habit of heaping gifts of striking splendour and great costliness. But there was an utter want of taste and artistic feeling in the arrangement, or rather want of arrangement, with which many objects of luxury and display were crowded together in disproportion with the apartment, and in utter absence of harmony or of pleasing contrast with each other. The whole place had an unmistakeable air of ostentation and vulgarity, such as was very rare in Athens, where men of all classes

justly prided themselves on elegant simplicity, and on the combination of liberality and economy in sensible and graceful proportions, as being the general characteristics of Attic life.

Cleon was of tall stature, and of burly frame. The girth of his bust was enormous; and his limbs, though unsymmetrical, were large and muscular. Though scarcely arrived at middle-age, he had begun to show signs of unwieldy corpulence; and his short bull-neck seemed hardly to separate his fleshy heavy chin from the chest. He wore his beard close trimmed. His dark-brown hair rose in small crisp curls over a head, that was full-sized, round, and well-vaulted, but which a phrenologist would have censured on account of the unduly large developement of the cerebral organs behind the ear. His small, black eyes were deep-set, keen, and sparkling; but their glance was always stealthy and restless; and it was observed of Cleon that he never looked his man full in the face while the other was looking at

him. The eye-brows were scanty and irregular. The cheek-bones were large, and would have been disagreeably prominent if the face had not been remarkably sleek and plump. The complexion and the teeth were good; and the lips, though rather large, were well-formed, and their curvature could be eminently expressive of either mirth or malignity. He looked altogether like a man, with whom it would be desirable not to have very much to do, either as enemy or friend. He was clever, unscrupulous, selfish, sensual, vindictive, versatile, and vain, but not without an easy kind of good humour, and a liking to have social good cheer and good humour round him—qualities that would make him an attractive boon companion, an indulgent relative and master, and willing to do a good turn for any one whom he thought a good fellow, if the doing that good turn did not involve any risk or much trouble to himself.

Cleon had raised himself on his elbow, as his own attendant entered the room with

Atalanta and Xanthias. He eyed Atalanta keenly; but he eyed still more keenly the folded parcel which Xanthias left on the table. When both the servants were gone, Cleon beckoned Atalanta to a seat near the drinking-table. He then took a draught of wine, and held the cup out towards Atalanta, saying, "Will you pledge me, oh stranger, by whatever name you are to be called?"

Atalanta replied, "I am called Athanas, son of Menon, of Cynæthæ in Arcadia. I cannot take wine at this hour."

"Do as you please, most excellent Athanas. It is as well to be civil. But, if you prefer it, we will waive all compliment and ceremony, and come at once to business. Of course it is business of some importance that has brought you here. I do not allow my resting-time of the day to be troubled by common visitors."

"My business is of life-and-death importance. Platæa . . ."

"Well, and what of Platæa? It is a bad

business. The enemy are going to wall it round, and to treat it worse than we have treated Potidæa. Those within the town will have to stint themselves from short to shorter commons, and at last to no commons at all. If they are as stubborn as the Potidæans were, they will hold out till they have eaten a few of their own number. But they will have to surrender at last. The Thebans will get hold of them, and then——" Cleon here passed the side of his hand across his throat. Atalanta understood the gesture, and shuddered. Tired at her silence, Cleon got up from his couch and walked to the table where Xanthias had deposited the talent. He removed the covering, took up the gold, poised it in his hand to judge its weight, and then with a smile of approbation he carried it to a large chest in a recess in a corner of the room. He carefully opened the chest, placed the gold in it, and then after reclosing the chest and securing the lock, he returned to his couch. He did not recline again, but sate down opposite to

Atalanta, and said to her, in a slow, low, clear voice, "My generous friend, if you do not show much readiness in speaking, you show some in appreciating merit. You evidently comprehend that a man like me, who has sacrificed a fortune and ruined a lucrative business for the sake of devoting himself to the support of the Good Cause, may fitly be supported by the friends of the Good Cause. And now speak out, and speak plainly what is it that you want done for yourself? Do not speak in a hash of bad Doric, but talk Attic, as I am sure you can if you like. You are no more an Arcadian than I am. Gold does not grow on their beggarly mountains. Mind, I am not inquiring who or what you really are. I never on these occasions ask unnecessary questions; and I never continue a conversation with a visitor, who refuses to answer necessary ones. What do you want me to do for you?"

"I want Platæa to be saved."

"That is, there are some certain persons,

or perhaps some one person in the town, whom you wish to see safe and sound in Athens?"

Atalanta replied, "It is so."

"Come, that is candid. We shall get on with our business now. And how do you propose that I should get any one out of Platæa?"

"Is it quite hopeless to lead an army there and force the blockade?"

"The idea is utterly absurd. The man, who got up in the Assembly to propose such a thing, would be hooted down, and never listened to again. Even Hyperbolus would not venture to recommend it."

"All in Platæa may be saved, if peace is made."

"Peace with the Lacedæmonians? That is a sublime idea, but it is also a sublime absurdity. Do you not know that they haughtily rejected our entreaties for peace about a year ago?"

"Those who rule most in Sparta, may be made to think, or at least to act differently

on the subject. I am told that golden streams can flow into the Eurotas."

"What! you would bribe the Ephori? You are a bold schemer. They certainly are open to solid arguments, if the colour and the weight are well chosen. Would you risk a journey to Sparta for the purpose?"

"Willingly. And I believe that I could accomplish it."

Cleon rose and walked slowly up and down the room, muttering to himself, "Peace—a general peace-policy. That would be a strong proceeding. I used once to oppose Pericles and the war-party, but I have been sailing on the other tack lately; I must not turn the tide again so soon. Yet, a truce might be managed. Gold seems ready to crop up in this new quarter." He then paused in his walk, and standing opposite to Atalanta, said, in a very significant tone—"Is the safety of your friends in Platæa of much value?"

Atalanta answered quickly, "Of at least ten talents."

"Ten talents! hem, that is a good round sum; and you would have to expend at least as much at Sparta. Are you sure that all this gold would be forthcoming?"

"Quite certain. Even more would be ready in a few months, if that delay would not be fatal."

"Not by any means. Platæa is safe to hold out for several months to come. Have you reason to believe that any one—I mean any one known in the Public Assembly—would come forward to propose measures for getting a truce made for a year or two with the view of adjusting a permanent peace? I might support such a measure, but I could not originate it."

"I believe that statesmen of note and of influence would propose such measures, if they had sound cause to think that the proposal would succeed, and that the proposer would not be impeached."

"Aye; success is the test of merit in this as in most other matters. There might be a fair chance of getting a decree in favour

of a truce; that is, if I and my friends felt, after due consideration, that we could withdraw our present opposition to Nicias and the rest of the peace-party. After what I have heard you say as to the value of the measure, I think this may be done. But it is absolutely necessary that things should be made pleasant at Sparta. The first hint, if not the first proposal, must come from Sparta. Perhaps the Argives might be induced to offer their mediation. Aye, that will be the likeliest scheme. But gold will be needed at Argos also, and then you must take your measures to ensure the assent of the Lacedæmonians. This seems practicable. Of course an essential term of the truce will be that we are to be at liberty to withdraw our garrison from Platæa. I think I could get our Assembly here to agree to this. The town might remain unoccupied till peace was settled. I suppose you only care about the garrison, not the place? Will it be enough for you if the Athenian part of the garrison is got safely out of the town?"

"That will accomplish my main wish; though I should be glad if all in Platæa could be rescued."

"Well, if there is to be a truce, I can make sure of getting our own citizens out of the den. You say that you have the means of reaching Laconia? You must go by way of Argos. I will place you in communication with safe men at Argos, who will aid you in getting admission to Sparta, which is not an easy matter. These details had better be talked over with Chremylus, who will explain the arrangements to you when we have settled them. You yourself had better not come here again till you return from Peloponnesus. Tell Chremylus to come here soon after nightfall."

"I will follow your directions. May I now retire?"

"Yes. We understand each other thoroughly; and I suppose we both understand that we must keep each other's secrets in the matter. Let me see you as soon as you return from Sparta. And do not forget the

value, at which you have estimated the performance of my share of this business. You must also reckon on one or two talents for expenses at Argos."

"I shall remember accurately and practically. For the present, farewell.

"Farewell, Athan*as*, or Athan*ais*, as the case may be."

Cleon spoke these last words with a half-sarcastic, half-mirthful smile, which made Atalanta glad to shrink back into the gloom of the passage, and caused her to pull the Arcadian bonnet well down upon her brow, before she walked back to Chremylus's house, followed by Xanthias, who had been waiting for her.

"So far, so well," she thought. "I can provide nearly all the twenty talents for this bribery out of my own funds in Athens, and, if more is needed, I shall have time to bring it from our buried treasures at Sinope. But I must first seek Diotima. I must try if her art, be that art what it may, can purify me from that man's blood, and can drive

away or propitiate the avenging phantoms that flit round me. At dawn to-morrow I will be with her. Oh that the night, and its visions of terror, were gone by!"

END OF VOL. I.

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